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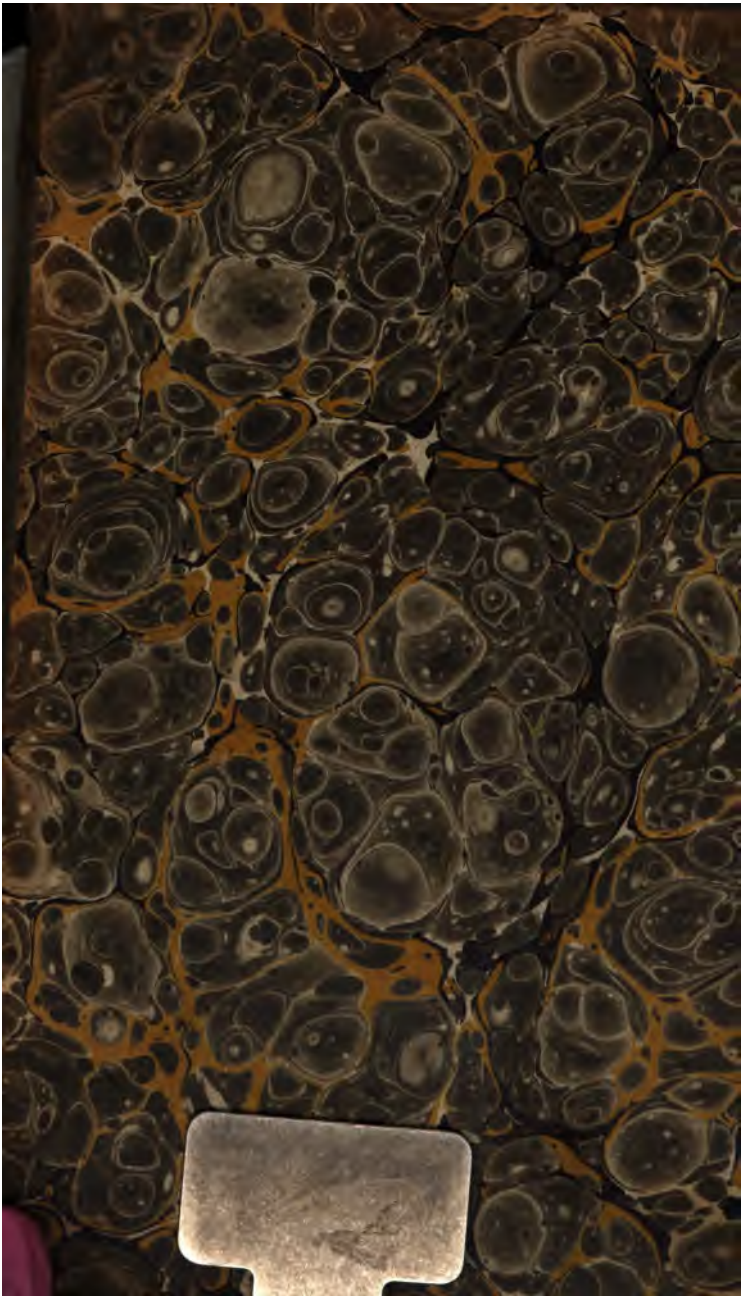

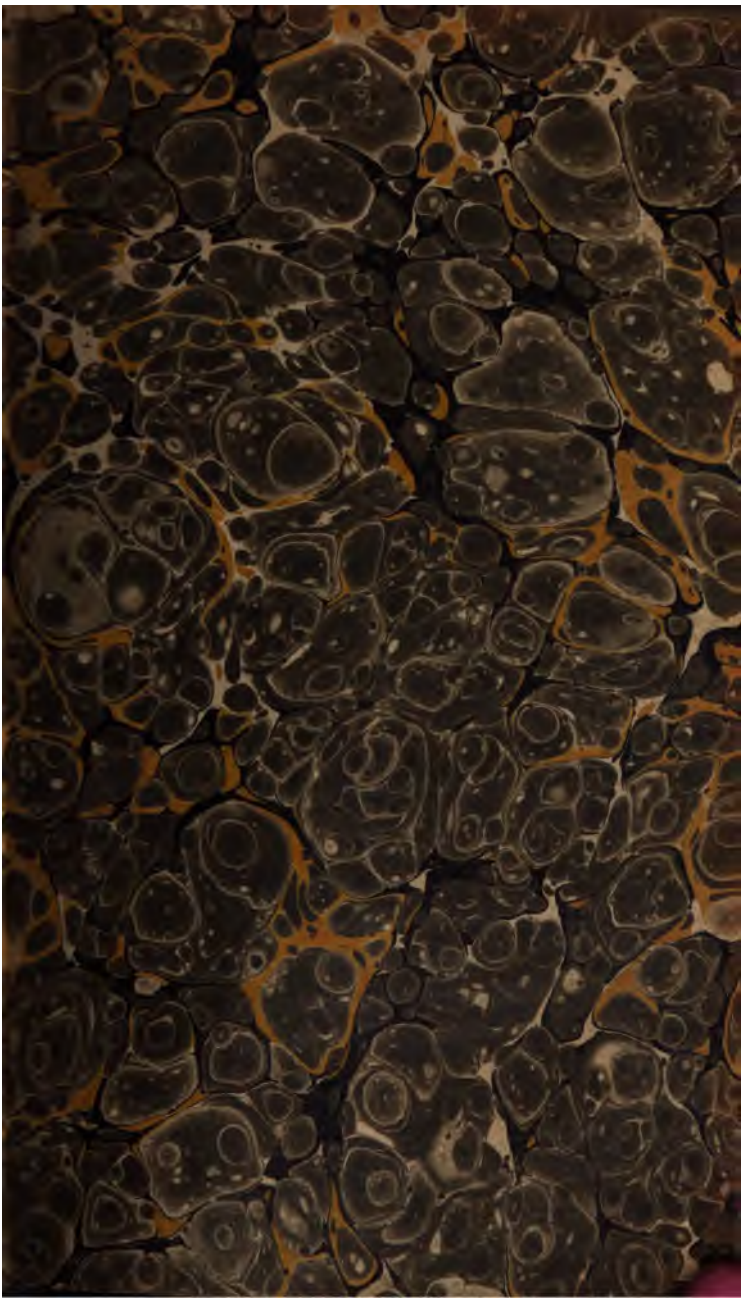

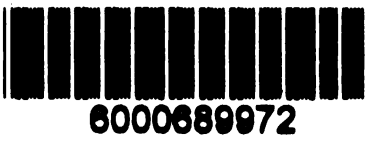
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ROSABELLA:

OR,

A MOTHER'S MARRIAGE.

VOL. III.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey.

ROSABELLA:

OR,

A MOTHER'S MARRIAGE.

A NOVEL.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES;
SANTO SEBASTIANO, OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR;
THE FOREST OF MONTALBANO; AND
ADELAIDE, OR, THE COUNTERCHARM.

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ROSABELLA.

CHAPTER I.

For nearl yan hour, the aching head of the weeping Rosabella had rested on her pillow, ere Lady Meliora — who always bestowed an immensity of time upon disrobing, as well as attiring—condescended to give utterance to more than monosyllables, even to the inquisitive Betty; who, from having lived in the nursery at Ravenswood ever since the infancy of Lady Meliora, felt all anxiety to learn, if her dear young lady had as much admiration to boast of, as her still greater favourite Miss Rosa, whose adventures on Richmond Hill had been circumstantially communicated to her and Mrs. Dermot by Terry, who

had exultingly witnessed all the homage our heroine had received.

But, at length, it suddenly darted into the remembrance of Lady Meliora, that if she injudiciously persevered in the ungracious silence, her poignantly felt mortifications and envious symptoms had inspired, some high triumphs of her surpassing beauty must remain unrecorded: since she was certain, neither Lady Wilemore nor her niece would have sufficient candour to repeat them; Lord Derville had spent too much of his time in the betting booth, or with Miss Vandelure, to know any thing relative to her; and Mrs. O'Dowd had been too much occupied in gaping after fashions, foreigners, and Lady Flowerdew, to have observed any thing but them. But how to descend from the impregnable fortress of stately silence, after such a steady sojourn there, was rather puzzling; yet, as it was now become her wish to blazon forth her own achievements in conquest, she had only to apply for aid to her ingenuity, and quickly she discovered a path to open by, easy and plausible.

"I declare, Betty," she at length exclaimed, "you are become as unreasonable as the multitude, who expect a hair a-piece out of Blucher's mustaches and Platoff's horse's tail.—Can you conceive my mind is not engaged by this extraordinary and alarming absence of my dear brother, that you expect me to prattle nonsense to you, as I used to do in the nursery at Ravenswood, when I had nothing to think about?"

"Why, jewel, as you knew Master Char*less* was only just gone to sleep at another hotel, in a pet with my Lady, I thought you had no longer any call to be fretting in regard to that."

"That is very true, Betty; and certainly, it is useless to fret about a matter of so little consequence, since, I have no doubt, he will be here to breakfast, and all made up. So, let me see, if I can recollect any of the million of questions you have been putting to me? Well then, in reply, we had our carriage, by the arrangement of that blundering Mr. Foxcraft, whose true name, I am sure, must be *Goosecraft*, to

the left of the umpire's stand, instead of opposite to the royal stand; as if it was the races, and not illustrious personages, we went to see; and, by this stupid manœuvre, we were completely distanced in our aim of seeing, or being seen by the foreign wonders; for as her Majesty chose to remain stationary, all, through *etiquette*, remained with her, and, until they were going off the ground, there existed no chance of a look, or a shake of the hand, from one of them; and then, there was such an impetuous rush, to try what could be done, ladies vaulting out of their carriages like wild romps, that, being unused to crowds, I felt too cowardly to proceed, which was the whole and sole cause of my being despoiled of my full share of admiration: but I would not, even had my courage been equal to the prowess, have rudely pressed upon those strangers for their notice, and mount up, like a savage, into the very carriage to the emperor, as my three companions accuse one another of doing.

"However, I console myself with admiration much more flattering than such *en*

passant approbation; for you must know, most inquisitive Mrs. Betty, that whilst the acclamations were rending the very skies, upon the arrival of the emperor and his sister on the course, I stood up in the landau, to obtain a glimpse of them, when suddenly I felt something alive rubbing against my arm; and, upon turning my head round to see what it was, I beheld the leaders of a four-in-hand equipage, with their heads in our landau, dashing them up and down in all their high mettled pranks. So I shrieked, expecting their next step would introduce their legs into the carriage to us: when, lo! in one moment, like the effect of magic, the driver of the vehicle twitched them round to the other side of his coach, the body of which he drew up exactly parallel with ours. Raising my eyes to see who had effected all this, to make my bow of gratitude, I beheld, seated by Phaeton, — who was an absolute divinity—our Shooter's Hill appendage, Mr. Dashwood, whom I saw instantly whisper his companion, whose eyes from that moment were never re-

moved from my face, whenever he could obtain an opportunity of gazing upon it, which was pretty frequent; for although Mr. Dashwood instantly vanished, I know not how his companion, who had four attendants mounted on the roof and in the rumble-tumble, remained stationary, to feast his enraptured gaze whenever his impatient steeds would permit his continuing near me; and Lady Wilemore, promptly claiming the evident conquest for her odious niece, proclaimed in her triumph, that this beautiful and entranced Phaeton was Lord William Rentlorn, son to the Marquis of Timberdown, one of the most admired young men of the age.

" ' But, indeed, my lovely Alinda,' she affectedly added, ' you must keep this conquest secret as possible, to shield yourself from poisoned stilettoes and darts, levelled at you by half the love-maddened dames in town. I hope you will treat this conquest properly, and not disregard it, as all who are rich in captives are vastly apt to do.'

" At this moment, a fine martial-looking cavalry officer rode up to the carriage, and,

after 'hoping Lady Wilemore was well,' requested, in rather an audible whisper, 'an introduction to that beautiful creature she was *chaperone* to,' when—Rosa are you asleep?"

"I am all attention," replied Rosabella, sitting up in her bed, whose tears had been suspended, and interest excited, the moment her beloved friend allowed her long withheld accents again to flow.

"Well then, only conceive the woman's effrontery! She coolly attempted the introduction of Miss Standard to him.

"'My dear Madam,' he exclaimed, with a half suppressed laugh, 'you forget I have had the honour of Miss Standard's acquaintance these four years!' and now, again lowering his voice to more of a fancied whisper than the reality, for he continued most perfectly audible, he said:—

"'It is that beautiful, and *very* young attractor, I request an introduction to; not only to gratify my own anxious wishes, but in compliance with my friend Lord William Rentlorn's earnest entreaty, who, with myself, is absolutely fascinated.'

"Her Ladyship acceding to this request, the officer retreated, and in a few moments returned with Lord William. Both dismounted, when the introduction took place; and, upon obtaining permission, both his Lordship, and Captain Hawk, who is quartered at Hounslow for the present, came into the landau to us, and paid much civility to the other ladies, but to me the most marked attention; took their repast with us, and obtained my permission to call here to-morrow, to inquire how I bore the fatigue of my excursion, and to be introduced to grandmama. So if even nothing else comes of these delightful acquaintances, I shall be at no loss in future for attending beaux."

"Nothing can come of it, but the convenience of attending beaux and pleasing acquaintance; unless you should sip your beverage from the Lethean stream," said Rosabella.

"That even would have no effect," Lady Meliora replied: "no stream can rise in altitude to extinguish the sun's resplendent rays."

Lady Meliora's head was now resting on her pillow, Betty departed, and her Ladyship, restored to the free use of her oral faculties, talked herself and friend into that repose they both required.

On the subsequent morning, Lady Meliora arose on the tiptoe of expectation, for rivetting the chains she had thrown around Lord William and his military friend; yet not without some uneasy sensations of alarm, relative to the effect the appearance of the newly discovered beauty in her young friend might have upon them: whilst Rosabella arose, with her mind filled with the anxious hope of the good sense of Mr. Monson leading him, after a night of serious reflection, to the breakfast board of his family, with the spirit of indignation subdued by reason.

But Rosa's hope was not realized. No Charles,—no intelligence from him appeared; whilst, to her utter amazement, his grandmother neither expressed nor seemed to feel any alarm at his absence; for the doctrines of Mr. Sternham's morning lecture had taken such effect, that in-

dignation at his undutiful conduct had superseded every softening tone of affection; insomuch, that when breakfast was approaching its termination, and Lord Derville expressed his intention of trying his rhetoric in persuading Mr. Freecastle to lead him to his brother, Lady Derville haughtily exclaimed—

"At your peril, Mortimer, seek him.—I will suffer no one in my family to degrade me, by the condescension of inquiring after so ungrateful, so unfeeling, so undutiful a personage as Mr. Monson; who, forgetful of all he owes me for my tender care of him, has inhumanly taken a step, which he trusts will plunge daggers into my heart: but let him beware they do not reach his own.—When the gentleman finds it for his own interest to seek his truest friend, I doubt not *that interest* will lead him home."

The moment breakfast was ended, Lady Meliora, awakened to alarm through the fears she imbibed from the miserable Rosa, relative to the protracted absence of her impetuous brother, took an opportunity of dispatching Betty Roach with a request to

Mr. Freecastle, to forward without delay a letter from her to Mr. Monson; and upon the courteous *Maître d'Hôtel's* ready assent, she retreated to her chamber, and rapidly scribbled—

"You vile truant!

"WHAT do you deserve for so mercilessly destroying, at least, four ounces of my most transparent bloom of roses, and conveying not less than six drachms of yellow ochre into the lilies of my complexion, through alarm and uneasiness at your mysterious disappearance? whilst Rosa, who has not left one feather dry in her pillow, weeping for your perilous prank, I think will be immolated without further respite or compunction upon the Hymeneal altar, as the cause of your naughty tricks: so, if you have one particle of pity in your composition, let it lead to the revival of my faded charms, and to the rescue of the hapless maid from sacrifice to that fee-fa-fum cannibal, who, I am tremblingly aware—and by no means secure that my immolation will not be

next required—only wants her to wife, as ogres entice children to their castles, to devour them. So dismount, I pray you, from your high war horse, and come prancing home, without delay, on your gentle palfry of family concord, to receive a warm and welcome embrace from

"Your affectionate sister,

"MELIORA MONSON.

"Saturday morning."

Mrs. O'Dowd had requested permission for both her young friends to accompany her this morning, upon an excursion to execute commissions for her Irish friends—her visit to Lady Flowerdew being suspended by her Ladyship's own information at Ascot, 'of her engagement to remain at Windsor Castle that night;' but Lady Meliora, apprehensive of losing the promised visit of her two captives, declined, and with an ungracious acquiescence from Lady Derville, Rosa was permitted to go.

When Mrs. O'Dowd got into her carriage, she ordered it to Moorfields, whither she accordingly was conveyed; and,

after there executing the commissions of Mrs. M'Fangle, her next order of march was for Bond Street. Her business being completed there, she next desired to be taken to Warwick Lane, Newgate Street, upon which she heard a sort of sullen murmur burst from her coachman; and when they arrived at the Old Bailey, Rosabella communicated to her companion—upon her observation of the tremendous prison—"that they certainly had been that way already, on their excursion to Moorfields."

"Ah! now were we, my honey? What a pity, we did not know London better; for we might have killed two birds with one arrow—but all will go in our day's work."

"But, unluckily, it will go in that of the poor horses too," said Rosabella.

"Fortunately we have no gentleman with us to lecture us for that," replied Mrs. O'Dowd. "If Alermont was here, he would be frantic with me, if I took the veriest garrans, that ever crawled, one inch out of their way: and that is one reason I hate men to be accompanying one upon

shopping expeditions, for they think of nothing but the weary horses."

"Weary enough, I doubt not," returned Rosa. "But does it not impeach the compassion of our sex most direfully, for men only to think of the fatigue the poor animals, that are conveying us at our ease, are enduring, through our thoughtlessness in not arranging a line of march? and which I conceive one might very materially contract, upon regular days of shopping, to be undergone in this widely extending metropolis, by forming a little outline of our course, after having made our list of purchases."

"No doubt we could, my compassionate honey! if we would but find humanity sufficient to think of our horses, whilst our heads are full of all the elegant hats and caps and lovely dresses we are going to deck ourselves in."

Mrs. O'Dowd having had Messrs. Le Tench's draught honoured in the College of Physicians, to yield her the power of purchasing those adornments she delighted in, she gave directions to be conveyed to Hill-

yard and Nourse's, in Welbeck Street; and they were proceeding briskly to the westward, when in Holborn they both at the same moment observed Mr. Monson rapidly pass them in a hackney coach, with a female seated by him, to whom he was so earnestly speaking, that he observed them not; a female, who, in the transient view they had obtained of her, appeared extremely young and beautiful.

Rosabella, through some undefinable presentiment of evil befalling Charles from this suspicious incident, since the virulent censure passed upon the great metropolis by Mr. Sternham had informed her, that temptation might assail Mr. Monson whichsoever way he turned; becoming pale as the semblance of death, looked so shocked, so distressed, that Mrs. O'Dowd, although exceedingly grieved for the snare she doubted not he had been entoiled by, anxious to comfort Rosa, and pour balm into the heart of wounded affection, which she suspected was more tender than that of sisterly attachment—instantly exclaimed—

"So, I perceive Mr. Monson has been detained from us this morning, by meeting, at the hotel he slumbered at, some of his own country neighbours, whom he is now escorting about.—I dare say, Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Dillon. I think the lady was like her."

"Did you see a gentleman with him? I only beheld a female companion," said Rosa, faltering.

"I think I had the glimpse of a man, as I popped my head out of the window in eager curiosity, but I cannot positively affirm it was so; for my gentleman's pride just bethought itself at that moment of the degradation it was exposing itself to, of being seen by any prying eye in a hack; so that his honour whipped up the window with such a haughty flourish, no time was afforded me for certain investigation. Possibly he might have seen me, and if so, this aforesaid pride will never forgive my impertinent detection; therefore I must spare it the humiliation of ever knowing I discovered this degenerate expedition in a hackney drag; and let me advise you

too, my honey, to persevere in silence upon the subject."

"Certainly, Mrs. O'Dowd, I shall not take the liberty of mentioning the circumstance to him, or to any one," replied the sorrowing Rosa; who, fearing all was not in train for his welfare, felt that to him the subject would be improper, and to his sister only productive of grief.

But, after a pause, Rosabella continued, "If Mr. Monson is detained from home by any of our Ravenswood neighbours, we soon shall know it, by their calling upon you, Mrs. O'Dowd. Heavens send it may be so!"

"Amen, my honey!—But, from the bottom of my heart I pity the grandchildren of Lady Derville. All born for leading parts upon the great theatre of life, they have been reared only for the cell of the anchoret. And do you know, Rosa, although you are to the full as very a novice in the world's wiles as they are, yet I have not half the apprehension for you I feel for them.—For, whatever might have been

your ruling passion, it has been curbed by the judicious management of Lady Ann Belmont, and not nurtured, like theirs, until they are trained up with them, ripe to become the auxiliary of ten thousand mischiefs. Well, for their sakes I must exert my energies to bring about an intimacy with Lady Flowerdew, to get them into appropriate society; since to come forth from the shell of seclusion, to form intimacies with any windfall, will never do. But pray, my honey dear! what is this Lady Elstow about? Will she not introduce the grandchildren of her old friend into circles proper for them to move in?"

"Why, she is a determined valetudinarian it seems," said Rosa; "yet still she has kindly promised to come to town the very first drawing-room, to introduce Lady Meliora."

They now arrived in Welbeck Street, where there were too many temptations for captivating the fancy of Mrs. O'Dowd, for her purchases and orders to be rapidly dispatched; but when again in the car-

riage to proceed upon their travels, Mrs. O'Dowd let down the front glass to speak herself to the coachman.

"Go," said she, "to No. — Cheapside, and if that is far off, you must drive quick, as I want to be in Albemarle Street by three o'clock, to take Lady Derville to Fitzroy Square."

"I have been once already in Cheapside with you to-day, ma'am; and a second time on its skirts, and it is unpossible to go trotting about at that there rate," returned the coachman sullenly, "without another pair of horses to take their turn; but where you are to get them, I knows not; for by the time these here foreigners be gone, we shan't have no sound winded horse in no stable in Lunnun, no, not even in the Prince Regent's own; and as to going quick, if the cattle could do it, there is no time for no such unreasonable doings, since it wants now but a quarter to three."

"Ah! my now, who could have suspected its being so late!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, "I really thought to have broke

the neck of my shopping this morning, and I have done nothing."

"If you han't broke the neck of your shopping, your shopping has pretty nigh broke the wind of your horses; and, if you have done nothing else, you have knocked them up. Trot, trot, over the stones from west to east, and from east to west, and wait, wait, hour after hour, at doors—I am sure I *does* not know what master will say to it, but I be very certain though, he will as soon cut off his right hand as let you, while there is such a demand for horses, keep these here on for your shop lifting, since this is the way you racks them; to and thro, over the same ground, not knowing, as I thinks, your right hand from your left."

"Shop-lifting!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, growing very indignant. "Shop-lifting! What can the insolent fellow mean?"

"Pure ignorance," replied Rosabella, "for assuredly he knows not the meaning of the word."

"He shall never drive me again; I would sooner walk up to my knees in mud.

He cannot be an Englishman, to be so uncivil."

"That he is a savage, is pretty clear," replied Rosabella; "yet, you had better pause ere you declare war with him; and remember the difficulty you experienced in procuring any horses at all, in this unprecedented demand for them; and besides, I fear he has had but too much reason to complain of your ignorance in the geography of London."

"Right, my little Wisdombag! I must not allow anger to lurch me; so Art, have at him! I'll *pilaver* him into a reconciliation."

"Why, indeed, my good friend, I fear," said Mrs. O'Dowd, looking demurely humble, "I have unthinkingly been very hard upon you and your horses to-day, not duly considering which hand I ought to turn to first; so there is a one pound note, to give them an additional feed of corn, and you a draught of porter to drink better knowledge of London to me, ere we set out to-morrow on our rounds, which, I

promise you, shall be regulated by the map."

"Oh! bless you, never trouble your ladyship's honour's head about no such stuff, as them there maps," replied the coachman in an altered tone, with the hand in which he grasped the note respectfully placed in obeisance at his hat. "Our cattle be well fed, and ben't *afeard* of work, nor I neither, when as how I *serves* a lady, as I *sees* you be every inch on you: so don't you believe but you shall have horses, let who will go without. No, none on them there sneaking bribes, as I have been offered, to persuade master to take these here nags from you, shall do it; and was there time, I could take you with ease to Cheapside; but after we *has* been to Fizroy Square, I can bowl you there in no time."

"Oh! the powers of bribery and corruption!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, as she closed the carriage window; "and you, who are the gentle priestess of pity's self, you have been the mover of all this;

so should the poor steeds die in my service, they will certainly haunt you, and carry you off some dark stormy night to Pippin Grove, with grim Sternham mounted on one of their skeleton backs, under the form of Alonzo the brave."

CHAPTER II.

When arrived in Albemarle Street, Mrs. O'Dowd and her lovely companion found Mr. Sternham standing sullenly at one of the drawing-room windows, watching impatiently for their return: Lady Derville employed in some degree of similarity, for she was seated too at a window, alternately gazing at the passing multitude and her darling Meliora; who, in a bright blaze of animated conscious beauty, was singing Irish melodies to her own accompaniment on the harp for Captain Hawk, who had continued his visitation now a full hour after the departure of Lord William Rentlorn, whom particular business at Tattersal's had drawn from his admiring station by the fair melodist.

The simple and uncostly attire of Rosabella, stamped her at one glance, in the estimation of the lynx-eyed captain, as

an appendage to the family, of no utility for the purposes of pecuniary speculation.

" Oh! Mrs. O'Dowd," exclaimed her ladyship, ceasing her warbling the moment she appeared, " I thought you would never come back, and that Rosa was playing me a slippery trick, in purchasing certain grave fineries becoming canonical propriety, without consulting my taste. Ah! ha! that tell-tale blush pleads guilty to my suspicions, and promises me a mitred *trimming* for my sagacity. But now, long wished for being arrived at last, I have, after introducing Miss Frederick to Captain Hawk, to announce to you, ladies, that we have been impatiently waiting for you to accompany us to the Stable Yard, to behold the humours of Blucher's Court of Momus; and to see the emperor arrive at Cumberland House, to receive the Lord Mayor, &c."

" I suppose, madam," said our heart-wrung heroine, now pained to the quick, at her beloved Meliora, even in jest, alluding to her union with Mr. Sternham as a possibility; and with fluttering bosom

venturing to address her sadly changed protectress, "I suppose you are not to form one of this pedestrian party; and may I be permitted to remain with you?"

"No, child, I wish you to accompany those who form this party," her ladyship replied; "and I am in half an hour to accompany Lord Derville, to pay my compliments to Miss Vandelure."

Lady Meliora wild to be gone, since Lord William had promised to meet her in the Stable Yard, was, for a wonder, rapidly equipped, and without one moment of further delay they set out; Lady Meliora and Captain Hawk leading the van, and Mr. Sternham, now most amiable, the supporter of Mrs. O'Dowd and the recoiling Rosabella.

There had already assembled a much greater multitude in this small quadrangle, than it could commodiously contain: it therefore required much patience, perseverance, and steady generalship, to penetrate through the solid files collected; but Captain Hawk was fully equal to the enterprise; by a joke to the mechanic, a compliment to a lady, and a request to any

intervening gentleman in favour of a lady, he manœuvred a passage for himself and fair companion; but not so readily did Mr. Sternham steer himself and convoy through the impeding straits—ever and anon they were at a dead pause; but at length, Lady Meliora and her escort having made their way to an excellent station for beholding the exhibitions of Blucher, they made signals for the rest to follow them; but no possible pass could Mr. Sternham effect to proceed through.

"Do you entreat permission, Rosa, for us to pass," said Mrs. O'Dowd. "I perceive a commanding tone will not answer on such occasions."

Rosabella obeyed, and instantly the first barrier became as the pliant osier branches to let her glide in, but resumed the strength of the sturdy oak bough, to the firm exclusion of Mr. Sternham.

The timid Rosabella, now precipitated by the impatience of her companions into this alarming state of insulation, devoid of immediate protection in this formidable throng, was ready to sink with terror;

and was striving to find power of voice to convey her gentle supplication to be allowed to recede, when a ready hand grasped hers, and an exclamation, delivered in a tone indicative of astonishment at finding her there alone, informed her, ere she could turn to see who held her hand, that this prompt protection was afforded by Lord Bayswater.

"Oh! my lord," said Rosa, "I am indeed rejoiced to recognise any individual I ever saw before, since I have unfortunately been divided from my party."

"Who are you, sir, that dared the presumption of seizing that lady's hand?" exclaimed a voice almost inarticulate with indignation, whilst the spark violently snatched Rosa's hand away.

"Who am I?" responded his lordship, endeavouring to obtain a view of the hostile intruder. "Why I am one, Prince Furibon! who would not have endangered the smashing of this fragile arm, by turbulently snatching it from protection, ere I knew it was unworthy of the honour it had seized."

"Oh, Charles!" the now direfully agitated Rosabella said, "this gentleman's ready protection was offered me in kindness. I know him, and will announce him to you, when we are not where naming personages might prove annoying."

"Sir, I entreat ten thousand pardons for my hostile rudeness, which my conceiving you to be an intrusive stranger, led me into," Charles courteously replied, whilst endeavouring to manœuvre Rosa a little out of Mr. Sternham's track to pursue, who, he saw, was attempting to elbow his way to them. "To prove my penitence for my ungrateful attack—since all who would aid this lady, whom I estimate as my sister, I am indebted to—must I wholly resign her to your protection; or will you permit my sharing it with you?"

"Why, as the Hesperian fruit was thought to require two dragons to guard it," replied his lordship, smiling in amity, "we may, from one glance, pronounce this so too, and both share in the arduous undertaking."

"Did you drop from the clouds, Charles?" Rosa inquired; "for until you spoke I never beheld you."

"Why, that you could not very conveniently do, as I was the retracer of your footsteps hither; for in consequence of a note from Meliora, I was hastening to Albemarle Street, and saw you all crossing Piccadilly into St. James's Street; but I was not far enough in advance to overtake, ere you got entangled in the crowd."

At this moment a voice audibly exclaimed: "How long has he been in?"

"About ten minutes," was the response.

"That is rest enough. Let us have him out."

"Oh! Charles!" cried Rosa, looking the terror she experienced, "is it, can it be possible, that Captain Hawk can have brought us into the court of the Tower, and that it is one of the wild beasts they are going to make exhibit for us?"

Rosa received her answer from the mul-

titude, shouting out, "Blucher! Blucher! Blucher!' whilst many, to evince their peculiar partiality to this distinguished warrior, threw down all barriers of *politesse* to shout out the singularly endearing appellation of "*Old* Blucher!"

"Old Blucher! come out, you jolly dog! and show your brave, honest, cheerful face to us."

"You now know what this vociferous multitude want to come forth for their amusement," said Lord Bayswater, smiling in admiration upon the unsophisticated Rosabella. "But now your alarm may become more poignant and well grounded, since you perceive the wild animals are at large, surrounding you."

"Indeed," returned Rosa, smiling now at her own unfounded panic, "enthusiasm seems to have transformed the majority of our countrymen into very wild beings."

Marshal Blucher now appeared at a little distance from a window, with the sash closed; and which, by most expres-

sive gesticulations, he intimated he would not open to show his face, unless the ladies threw up their veils and showed him theirs.

Instantly every veil was raised, and a general exhibition of beauties and defects took place; and Blucher, in conformity with his implied articles of capitulation, threw open his sash, and came sufficiently through it to perform all that was expected of him, in courteous or cordial greetings; shaking hands with those who climbed in ambitious altitude for that distinction; blowing kisses to the fair who struck his fancy, and nodding and smiling at all; whilst, from the continued movement of the crowd, reinforcements working their way into the court, and others penetrating through the throng, to press to the foremost rank to obtain some mark of distinction from this popular favourite, much inconvenience necessarily was experienced by all, philosophically borne by some, not so by others; and in one of these fluctuating pressures, our heroine heard a very

handsome young man, who had just glided in immediately before her, thus go on with a detail to another gentleman :—

" And, so sir, we made a left-handed feint, neatly jockeyed the police, and gave them the go by to Wormwood Scrubs, after some beautiful sparring. Well, sir, here we commenced some desperate play. Clincher fought wide; Grinder got into his length, and gave him a stomacher, that hit completely in his wind.—Clincher appeared to dislike his customer, and fought shy.—Grinder went in to his man with great spirit, forced his head under his arm, and fibbed him well.—Clincher being full of pluck, rallied; a hugging round ensued, and now it went very hard with each; when Clincher bothered Grinder on both sides of the head; besides a beautiful facer that took him over the eye, and nearly scalped him."

The timid Rosa, in full belief the young man who was thus speaking, who, although extremely handsome, looked pale and haggard, was an unfortunate maniac; and the jargon he was uttering, the incohe-

rent raving of his malady; began to tremble so excessively, in apprehension of the possible mischief he might do to some one near him now he had begun to rave of scalping, that Charles, perceiving her sudden tremor, in much tender anxiety inquired "if she were ill?"

Softly she whispered the cause of her ague fit; and poor Mr. Monson, from never having heard that scientific slang before, had formed the same belief; and could only comfort her by assurances, "that this desperate maniac's arms were too completely pinioned down by the throng to effect any mischief; but that he would now make every effort to get out of his way."

Now the eyes, and every thought of Rosa and Charles, were riveted in wary observation upon this, to them, evident madman, who continued the same kind of jargon, with the most apparent satisfaction; when in the midst of his facers and stomachers, his pluck and his sparring, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh! ye comets and blazing stars!

there stands my ruling planet! Zounds! I must make my transit. Ha! Bayzey, my bard! you here!" nodding at Lord Bayswater, "when did you enter the ring? famous sport to-day!—but can't stop prosing with you, whilst you are rhyming with me; for there yonder stands the goddess of my idolatry. *Mettle* in her eyes, hey! not brass, though come from a brazen country; but gold, pure gold. Thanks to *Dashey* for the intelligence;" and now, with various noises made by his mouth in imitation of whipping horses, and whirling of wheels, &c., half the assembled multitude believing the emperor's coach was coming without mercy to crush them, there ensued a general flight to the right and left; many shrieking, with real or imaginary hurts, whilst the ideal charioteer unconsciously walked through the lane of his own making, Lord Bayswater, Mr. Monson, and Rosa, promptly following him, unimpeded to the spot which Lady Meliora occupied; where, to the amazement of her brother, he made a dead pause, and instantly began an apology to her

ladyship, for not contriving sooner to attend her.

"Rosa, for Heaven's sake! can you form any guess of who this extraordinary personage can be?" said the highly disconcerted Charles. "By your acquaintance knowing him, and by my sister's most joyful reception of him, our opinion of his malady was erroneous:—his disease is folly, not madness. And who too, can that other self-satisfied fop be, under whose protection she seems so contented?"

Rosabella informed him by whom Captain Hawk was introduced to his sister; and then applied to Lord Bayswater to know, if her belief was just, relative to that singular man's being Lord William Rentlorn; when she learned it was so; and that he was a nephew of Lord Flowerdew's.

Lady Meliora now perceiving her brother, greeted him with the most animated joy; and then proceeded to the introduction of her two obsequious attendants to him; but metal—although not exactly

brass, yet of sterling stamp, had found a mine in the bosom of Mr. Monson, that led him in militant *hauteur* to bow coldly to the self-proclaimed captive of his sister's fortune; and then turned in cordial attentiveness to Rosabella, and her more prepossessing acquaintance, whom she now took an opportunity of presenting to him.

Rosa having obtained a station on the steps of Cumberland House, where she could command a view of the crowd assembled, amid whom she at length discovered poor Mrs. O'Dowd, not a step in advance from where she had been severed from her; she now, by kind signals invited her friend to join her; yet even whilst she did what gratitude for the uniform good nature of Mrs. O'Dowd to her inspired—she trembled at the accompaniment she must necessarily bring with her.

But scarcely had Rosa made her dumb show invitation, when the emperor's carriage arriving, a new commotion took place, of striving paradoxically to get out of the way, and into it; whilst the veteran

Blucher's levee was instantly transformed into one of shouting acclamations for the emperor; who bowed, and smiled, and shook dirty and clean hands, and did all that enthusiastic John Bull required of him, with the most persevering condescension.

And during all this commotion, our heroine manœuvred as successfully to keep out of the line of His Imperial Majesty's observation, as Lady Wilemore had done to place herself and Standard in it: manœuvres that were not lost on Charles, who paid mental homage to the retiring delicacy that actuated them; whilst Lord Bayswater marvelled at such singular bashfulness in a girl, who, he believed, was only to be seen, to rivet the eye of entranced admiration.

The two attending beaux of Lady Meliora, after procuring for her a shake by the hand, and some flattering compliments upon her beauty, as they had before contrived to elicit for her many particular marks of Blucher's admiration, now further to please and adulate her, commenced

a flattering eulogium upon her country, through the extraordinary constellation of talent then emanating from it.

"It has given us an unvanquishable general," said the captain.

"And some of our very best soldiers," cried Lord William; "for Irishmen are full of pluck, and can bother their customers famously on both sides of the head."

"And our best statesmen," said the captain—

"And our favourite genius: for who fibbed his tigers up the hill of Parnassus in such effective style, making each enthusiastic muse claim him for her son, as *Sherry* * the sparkler?" said his lordship.

"And our first-rate female writer," said Captain Hawk, "or may I never take genius under my *Patronage*."

"And the best pugilist," returned his lordship, "or may I never take brawny Crushbone under my patronage."

And now, from one to the other were

* The immortal genius Sheridan.

echoed, the names of a bright constellation of Hibernians, whose names were then on Fame's record, as renowned for genius, or distinguished by their feats in arms; until at length Captain Hawk said, bowing to Lady Meliora,—

"And, our most surpassing beauty."

"Ay, by the cestus of Venus! Erin gives us there the go-by, as in every other pre-eminence," cried his lordship. "And may I never tool a curricle, if this is not the period of Irish ascendancy."

"That same is a sure thing, your honours!" shouted out a ragged fellow, from his equestrian station, upon a lamp iron above their heads: "for yez see, and success to yourselves! an ould boy of an Irish lamp-lighter can out-top yez all."

"And pray, sir," exclaimed Charles, who began to experience a little relaxation from his high-mettled pride, inspired by the pleasing ease with which he saw all ranks commingle in a good humoured multitude, "And pray, Sir Paddy, my gay fellow, what brought you here? Was it an affair

of life or death, that sent you racing over from Vinegar Hill*? Or how was it you came to forsake your own emerald isle?"

"Faith, Muster dear, whin you, and many the likes of your honour, left us, poor Pat was forced to follow, to luck after the bread yez tuck away wid yez from him.—There was in my batch of emigration, besides my own four bones, my wife, and five helpless childer, with an ould blint father to boot, that the heart of me wouldn't be leaving behind to starve on the deserted sod. But, as to the Vinegar trade, myself was never a partner in it. I tuck the contrary turn—being a dealer in oil, your honour."

"What! a lamp-lighter, my brilliant fellow?"

"Yes, your honour bright! It was the lamp that *light-enid* my care, and poured oil into the wounds of my poverty, for the last nine years.—But, 'tis soon dark and dreary it will all be wid me again; since 'tis all to be done by a single touch."

* A place made famous in the last Irish rebellion.

"The Promethean touch," said Lord Bayswater.

"Faith, and that's true, for your honour," responded Paddy; "it will be *pro-meat then*, and pro-bread into the bargain; for if it won't be a prohibition to both, I wonder at it: but 'tis not my *nathur* to be dispairing; and may be, some of those clever heads that will place an extinguisher upon mine, will be finding out some new invintion to give me honest bread."

"They will feed you and your children by steam, if you do not perish before the invention comes to perfection," exclaimed a morose looking man amid the multitude.

"Well," replied Paddy, "and more unlikely things have come to pass than that same, muster; for nothing's unpossible to the invintors of these days; and myself knows where there is a steam engine always at work in this country, to distil cordial comforts for the distressed; and that is in the heart of charity: so that I'll engage, if the *head* of one man deprives me of bread, the *heart* of another will restore it to me."

"Charity!" exclaimed the same man, with acrimonious contempt; "the sources of charity are exhausted by a ruinous war; and now this destructive peace is come upon us, thousands will be thrown out of bread; and we shall all starve together."

"Well!" cried Paddy, looking archly down upon this malcontent's abundant figure, "'tis an ill wind that blows no one good, and a little wholesome starving will be allowing you to move along more conveniently among those thousands, widout getting buffeted, for being a monopolizer of space in the world.—And what if we do at *last* suffer a bit, every man according to his station you to eat a fat bullock the less every week, and me to eat no meat at all at all, barring a salt herring now and then, to touch my *prato* wid, for a relish? Even that would not be neighbours' fare, for no sword of warfare has been desolating our peaceful country, taking from our grasp the staff of life; no invading foe setting fire to our cabins about our heads, and consuming our cities before our faces; tearing the son from the father's arms to

slaughter, and the babe from the mother's breast to slay; and rending every tie of human affection, in our bursting hearts, peacemeal. *Ochone*, if myself could read and write, I would be painting for you, like a limner, all myself heard a Russian warrior telling, the other day, of the miseries inflicted on his poor country; and if that wouldn't be teaching you patience to bear the *tempary* stops to John Bull's comforts, that may be coming upon him, myself thinks that blood, famine, rapine, and broken hearts, have got no tongues to preach upon the text of patience and contint to yez."

"Come down from your altitude, Paddy, my fine fellow!" said Lord Bayswater; "you and I must be better acquainted:" and when Paddy, after a shrewd look of observation, to penetrate if the gentleman was displeased at his speaking his mind so freely, did as he was desired; his lordship demanded his address, and then slipped some cash into his hand, and so did Charles, both desiring him to pocket their gift in silence.

"Is it for me to be silent wid money in *both* pockets?" exclaimed the astonished, and almost joy-maddened lamp-lighter. "Is it not to be thanking both your honours?—Och, murder! who would be an ungrateful *spalpeen* then? But here, take back your silver stream from the sweet milk of charity, your honours dear, if that is the unnateral condition it is given upon. To be silent! Och, *bubaboo!* but I'd burst then, wid my grateful feelings; and who then, I would be mighty glad to know, would be comforting the kit at home? Man and boy, I have been toiling on the wide earth tree and tirty years, and the likes of this blessed day's windfall never dropped from the rays of glorious charity upon my head before, and success to yez both! and good luck here and hereafter to yez!"

A new movement in the fluctuating throng of curiosity's gazing votaries, severed Paddy from his benefactors, when soon the attention of Lord Bayswater was attracted by the simplicity of a country lady, her two daughters and son, who had

never been in the metropolis until the preceding day; and were now as eager to collect every possible piece of information relative to the illustrious strangers, as to yield implicit faith to every thing absurd or improbable that they heard.

"O, mama," cried one of the gawky girls, "they say Blucher has an artist shut up in his closet, to take his bust.—Is taking busts against the law, that it must be done by stealth?"

"No, dear," replied mama, "it is not unlawful, but probably all the other apartments are pre-occupied by different artists; for no doubt, every one in England will wish to take his resemblance in their different departments."

"Sign-post operators, and all, madam," said Lord Bayswater, his bantering propensity now powerfully excited. "Why, madam, as you have most judiciously anticipated, so powerful is the mania for portraying this renowned hero in all his habits, that I know a fair artist, who, wishing to immortalize herself by her delineations of a sleeping Mars, and not possess-

ing interest to procure admission the usual way, causes herself to be let down by pulleys, in a basket, through the chimney of his chamber, at the dawn of day; and as he unconsciously slumbers, she industriously portrays."

"La! what a contrivance!" they all exclaimed, in credulous astonishment.

"But really, that is nothing," his lordship continued gravely, "to a whole family of beautiful young ladies, whose curiosity to obtain a thorough knowledge of this celebrated warrior's habits and manners was so infinite, it led them to enclose themselves with a few sandwiches, like the forty thieves of Arabian celebrity, in superb porcelaine jars, and to be conveyed into the Marshal's drawing room, where they might have remained undiscovered, until the day of their death, had they been contented with hearing only; but the Marshal happening to salute one of the fair enthusiasts, who walked up out of this court to visit him, with an electrifying smack, the enshrined, in alarm at the popgun, unwittingly, all at

once, raised their lids for a peep, when the lynx-eyed Marshal detected the ambush, and drew forth the sweetmeats each jar contained, to the amusement of all present."

"La! Sir, how vastly comical! and how I shall make my simple neighbours stare, who know nothing of life," said the astonished mama.

"But even this," continued his hoaxing lordship, "falls short of what may be effected yet, for the gratification of the present raging mania of curiosity. Why, there is a celebrated patentee of many ingenious devices, now exerting all his energies for the composition of mechanism for encasing fair ladies, to effect their admission, as useful and ornamental pieces of furniture, into the different apartments of these illustrious visitors; who, if they remain long enough to have their surprising inventions brought to perfection, may have their tables, flower stands, sofas, &c., performed by the fairest daughters of the land, just as, in the days of the Spectator, the

subordinates about the theatre, enacted orange trees, &c. as well as moons and lions."

"Well, to be sure!" cried this whole credulous party, "how one may live in the country, and really know nothing of what may be invented by ingenuity."

CHAPTER III.

The Lord Mayor &c. now arriving to pay their compliments to his Imperial Majesty, the bustle became so annoying to Lady Meliora, that she volunteered in the proposition of attempting a retreat; to which she was perhaps more propelled, by wishing to get home to adorn for the Opera; as Captain Hawk had learned from one of the pages at Cumberland House, that the allied sovereigns, with the Prince Regent, and their whole constellation, were to adjourn from Lord L————'s dinner party to the King's Theatre; and she had determined to go there, although Lord William and his friend had informed her, they knew it would prove an impossibility to obtain a box at that late hour, since no one would absent themselves on such an occasion who had a box to occupy, and that therefore she must stem the torrent of the pit, in which they would be most

happy to aid her: and upon this gallant offer of service, she made these speculating admirers happy, by an invitation to partake of Lady Derville's dinner.

With some difficulty they effected their retreat, but nothing of Mrs. O'Dowd, or her protector, could Rosa see; for they had been routed for the preservation of their lives, on the arrival of the emperor's equipage, and were in consequence gone home; Mr. Sternham to inform his patroness, that the stray sheep had returned to his shepherdess, and to give her a new lesson of inflexibility to the truant Charles; to whom his jealous enmity was raging with such vehemence, through his having obtained that post by Rosa, which the obstinacy of the multitude had deprived him of, that he felt as if the sacrifice of Mr. Monson's life would scarcely satiate his thirst for vengeance.

When arrived in St. James's Street, Lady Meliora announced to her brother her intention of venturing to the Opera House, and the invitation she had given to Lord William and his friend. Charles,

although much chagrined on his sister's account, at her having thus thoughtlessly extended this day's chain of encouragement to these evidently designing men,—yet, on his own, felt the intervention of strangers might prove an able auxiliary in his reseating himself at his family board, without the necessity of any interchange of painful apology between his grandmother and himself, whom, in his cooler moments of reflection, he pronounced equally to blame.

Of all the strangers to Mr. Monson, annexed to this morning's party, Lord Bayswater was the only one he felt propelled to form any acquaintance with; both from being more congenial to his own fancy, and from the extreme correctness evinced in his protection of Rosabella; in which, though attention was unfaltering, the most unpresuming respect marked it all. He therefore determined the invitation should be extended to him; and promptly made it, with so much winning cordiality, that his lordship's apprehension of proving an intruder, unwelcome to Lady Derville,

quickly vanished in his wish for further knowledge of the family, in which the beautiful Rosabella was an inmate; and gracefully, as graciously, he accepted the invitation; and, on arriving at Freecastle's door, he flew on the wings of the wind to Burlington Street, to adonise for dinner, which all agreed, from the then lateness of the hour, must prove a rapid meal.

Lord William and Captain Hawk flew off for the same purpose; but, it was to apartments in Freecastle's hotel, secured by the latter until after the review, to take place the following Monday, for the crafty purpose of being near to attend on Lady Meliora; and whilst he was ostensibly carrying on the siege for his friend, to plan a covert mode of attack for himself; since he considered her a very beautiful creature, well worth distancing a ruined, heartless jockey, in the pursuit of.

Mr. Monson retired for the purpose of dressing to his own apartments, determined not to make his appearance before his grandmother, until all the party had reassembled; and Lady Meliora, although

the most anxious of these votaries of the toilet to commence her task, yet from feeling the measure necessary, accompanied by the heart-trembling Rosa, presented herself before Lady Derville, to tell of her engagement to go to the Opera, and her having invited company to dinner, to attend her thither.

Rosabella, to her utter astonishment, received no reprimand from Lady Derville, or upbraiding look from Mr. Sternham: but she knew not it was to the kind interference of Mrs. O'Dowd, she was indebted for this forbearance; since that lady made the angry and disappointed suitor acknowledge, when he fain would have made his accusations good against poor Rosa, "that the separation he so loudly exclaimed against, was not the fault of either party; which found convincing proof, in no effort of his to rejoin her being crowned with success."

"And if she was forced on," she added, "by the torrent,—which constantly flowed towards Blucher's house,—to join Lady Meliora, I am sure it was a fortunate event,

that Lady Derville must rejoice at; for had it not been so, poor Lady Meliora would have been doomed to the glaring impropriety of remaining without any female companion, all this time, with these acquaintances of yesterday; whose private character we are ignorant of, and whom every one seemed to know, and as no one knew her ladyship, she might—and certainly would, my honey!—have been set down for an impure, and upon that supposition be hereafter insulted in public places."

This judicious suggestion, of this separation proving of advantage to Lady Meliora, appeased at once the kindling ire of Lady Derville; when Mr. Sternham found it would prove of no avail longer to censure Ross.

The communications of Lady Meliora relative to the opera and dinner company were not very pleasing to her grandmother, who wished her, neither to encounter the hazard of crowding into a public place,—although of the alarming magnitude of a London throng, pressing forward for accommodation, her secluded life allowed her

to form no conception—nor to effect further intimacy with Lord William Rentlorn, or his friend; the slang of one, and the easy assurance of the other, not being suited to her taste. But the wishes of her idol must not be thwarted, lest pouting should diminish the lustre of her beauty; and she uttered, although with no small degree of reluctance—

"Very well, my dear."

"There is only one alloy to my expected delights for this evening, grandmama," said Lady Meliora, now having been flattered into high good humour, by all the admiration she experienced in the Stable Yard; "and that is, through the idea of your being left alone; although I think that need not be, for Mr. Sternham ought surely to be kind enough to take his turn of staying at home with you. Mrs. O'Dowd cannot; for beside her own wish of seeing the Opera with all its glories, we shall want her for a *chaperon*; while as to Rosa, I shall not go without her; for if she is not to see any of the lions, better to have left her packed up with the state furniture at

Ravenswood: and at all events, we shall require her good luck to ensure the Emperor's not disappointing us; for if she remains at home, you may rely on it, not a step will he go to the Opera; but, with his sister, will come unexpectedly bounce into this room to you, sent hither by some tradition, to look for curiosities."

"Rosa is evidently not strong enough to endure more bustle and fatigue to day, my dear," replied Lady Derville; observing by Mr. Sternham's intelligent look at her, that Rosa's going to the Opera was not a measure which met his approbation.

"Oh! very well then, madam; if every thing is to be sacrificed to Mr. Sternham's humours, he shall have his sacrifice complete.—I shall not go to the Opera, since Rosa does not; neither will I appear at dinner," said Lady Meliora angrily.

"My dear Meliora," said Rosa, sorrowfully, but affectionately taking her hand, "do not allow your kind friendship for me to discompose you relative to so very a trifle, as whether I ever see an opera or

not.—It is right that I should stay at home, since Lady Derville thinks it is; and that recollection will soon reconcile you to the measure."

"Indeed it will do no such thing. I never will be reconciled to the unreasonable wishes of any one.—Besides, all this ill nature is not natural to grandmama; and as I well know the source it springs from, I will not submit to it.—Any restraint that arises from her own unbiassed judgment, no being shall be found more amenable to than myself: but that my grandmama, the Countess Dowager of Derville, should degrade herself, by becoming the tool, the bugbear, of any one, to terrify the poor children into their plans and selfish politics, I will rebel against.—And, as to the wise method in adoption, of cruelty and contradiction winning the affections of a beautiful young girl, I am sure it ought at least to open the eyes of the wilfully blind, to the soundness of that judgment they condescend to be governed by."

"Meliora! Meliora! I am surprised, as I am shocked, at your disrespectful teme-

rity !" exclaimed Lady Derville, her cheeks glowing with the mingling flush of resentment, and consciousness that her granddaughter's unceremonious statement was too near the plain unvarnished truth : and feeling some awakening pangs of wounded pride arising from the possibility thus suggested, that she was degrading herself in becoming a puppet bugbear for Mr. Sternham, she resolved, for this evening at least, to relax in her system of ungraciousness, that such a humiliating suspicion might not gather strength ; and without even one look for permission at her chaplain, her ladyship, addressing Rosa, said,—

" Your mild acquiescence in my decision, Rosabella, and not Lady Meliora's undutiful violence, has subdued my resolution of not allowing you to go into public.—You could feel conviction of my purpose being judicious, and for your interest, although my own grand-daughter could not.—You shall go to the Opera."

" By no means, dear madam," said our heroine, tears springing to her eyes, at this semblance of returning kindness. " By

no means, if there exists the smallest objection in your mind to my going."

"Nonsense! Rosa," exclaimed Lady Meliora; who now, in one of her resistlessly coaxing moods, was hanging round her grandmother's neck, and kissing her into prompt reconciliation: "I shall not give up the point, believe me. My own grandam has said you may go, and go you shall, as I am a living girl of spirit! and Mr. Sternham will take his turn of remaining at home: it is but fair that all the duty should not fall on you; and he, who is so great an advocate for the performance of duty, will be happy in the opportunity of evincing his to his patroness; and now especially, whilst there is that vacancy on the Irish bench, that handsome man, who was squiring you about to-day, mentioned to Charles.—By the way, Rosa, did Charles invite him to dinner?"

"Charles, invite him!" exclaimed Lady Derville, haughtily. "I think, after his late reprehensible conduct, Mr. Monson might have waited for my permission to authorize so great a liberty."

"Come, come, my own precious! you look so well, and so like me when you smile, that I will not have you cloud again," cried Lady Meliora, again kissing her: "Charles did it for my security, as it was necessary to enlist every strong man, who knew London, that could be found, to guard and guide us through the crowd to-night. — But who is this escort of yours, Rosa; and how came you acquainted?"

"He is Lord Bayswater, the celebrated poet, whom I told you I met at Lord Flowerdew's," said Rosa.

"Oh, lud, child, a poet! then let us make no unnecessary tarrying here, for if we are dressed like slatterns, the man will lampoon us," exclaimed Lady Meliora, more anxious even than before she knew it was Lord Bayswater, who was coming to dinner, to perform the adornments of the toilet; and snatching another kiss to seal her perfect reconciliation with her grandmother, she took the arm of Rosa.

But Rosa lingered, looked wistfully, sor-

rowfully, and doubtingly at her benefactress; who, subdued by her eloquent gaze to something of former kindness, held out her hand, and drew the timid Rosabella to her, who took the kiss her heart panted for, from this her long maternally kind friend; and then hastened away with Lady Meliora, to conceal, if she could not repress, the rising flood of joy; for in this kiss was conveyed the conviction of all affection, all interest for her not being extinct, though dormant, in the bosom of her benefactress. She left Lady Derville almost grieved, that Rosa could do any thing, to make the harshness her chaplain recommended, ever necessary; and Mr. Sternham infuriated at the chain Lady Meliora had bound him by, to the post of a home duty. Nor could the hopes, awakened by the vacancy on the bench of Irish prelates, calm the storm of passion within him, at the thoughts of Rosa's going, to be protected through crowds, and adulated through a whole evening, by young and dangerous rivals; and as Mrs. O'Dowd

had flown off to make a magnificent change in her attire, the moment her *début* at the King's Theatre was announced to her, he was now left the opportunity, as he possessed the inclination, of infusing some of the bitterness his unamiable heart was full of, into the returning milk of human kindness in Lady Derville's composition.

Lady Meliora had no great diversity of attire to make her selection from, since still disappointment awaited her ladyship in the execution of the different orders she had given for the embellishment of her wardrobe; as sufficient hands could not be procured out of the gaping multitude, to complete the work which the overflow of London at this period required; and now her murmurs were very animated and very natural, at being thus compelled to appear in comparative shabbiness, and so much in the distance of fashion, whilst any one remained in town to see her. Her only consolation for other deficiencies was in placing a beautiful ban-

deau of pearls round her head,—the gift of Charles to her,—whilst Rosa's only ornaments were fragrant flowers, becomingly disposed of, amid her lovely and luxuriant hair.

CHAPTER IV.

TEDIOUS as Lady Meliora ever was in the task of adornment, she yet with her lovely friend descended to the drawing-room before Mr. Monson, who managed for his entrance to take place with Lord Bayswater, in whose introduction to Lady Derville he contrived to veil the embarrassment of his own meeting compliments to her:—but hers were so chillingly frigid to him, that had not his lordship been his guest, he would have flown from the house, never more to enter it, until recalled by authority, or by very great concessions from his injudicious grandmother.

Lord Bayswater, who had never before seen our heroine but in a walking dress, was so electrified by the increase of beauty thus unveiled, of the luxuriance of her hair, the exquisitely fine contour of her head, and the graceful symmetry of her

form altogether, that his start of surprised admiration, and consequent intensity of gaze, well noted by Mr. Sternham, filled the bosom of that selfish wooer with dismay; whilst Mr. Monson, who, for years had been accustomed to behold the *protégée* of his grandmother, without experiencing any effect from her charms—but who, for the last few weeks, never looked upon her without the innovation of some fluttering emotions stealing through his bosom,—could not now gaze upon her with her bloom, her eyes, her smiles, reanimated by the dawn of her benefactress's returning affection, without menace to all his firmly formed resolutions of pride and prudence.

Almost immediately they were summoned to dinner; and when the carriages were announced, to convey them to the Haymarket, the gentlemen present, who were initiated in the expediency of the matter, declaring there was not a moment to be lost, their departure for the Opera House was rapid; but when arrived there, it

seemed a fixed decree of fate, that none should promptly possess power of reporting progress.

The visit of the illustrious strangers to this theatre having been universally known as intended, an immense multitude had been collecting from an early hour; and the moment the admission doors were opened, an impetuous torrent flowed in, with a degree of violence that bore down all before it, even to the pay-barriers at the pit-door; when—as every one may have heard—innumerable persons were forced along without the power of paying for their entrance. In consequence of this unintentional omission, much confusion ensued; and during the short and useless attempt to stop the multitude, for this pecuniary essential, our party arrived. When all again were suffered to proceed, they were borne with the resistless current, like a launch upon the ocean, into the receiving pit; not without the most terrific operations of fear upon our two poor novices in such situations — Lady Meliora and Rosabella—whose senses were

almost suspended by the horrid belief, that they were inevitably to be crushed to death in the tremendous pressure: but the moment they cleared the straits, and entered the area, the advantages of space became evident; and soon seated by their attentively kind protectors upon the first vacant benches they could seize, they promptly, by shedding a few tears, recovered from the natural effects of a scene so new, so appalling to them: and whilst sympathy was lavishly bestowed upon our two young friends, for their subduing terrors, Mrs. O'Dowd received the eulogiums of all their escort, for her calm heroism in a scene so calculated to alarm.

"Indeed," said Charles, "as Mr. Sternham would term it—'you proceeded like a lamb to the slaughter.'"

"That was more than some fair ladies in the throng did, however," exclaimed Lord William; "for some there were, who kicked, and shied, and winced confoundedly. But there was an Amazon who fibbed you famously, Baysey, my patient fellow! That pedestrian jeweller, who

wanted to give you the go-by — Egad, I expected she would have put the Nine in mourning, by smashing your lyre for you, when she got your head in chancery. She planted some good hits—went into her man with such spirit, and made such desperate play, I thought you would have gone down weak—*Morbleu!* what pluck she displayed!"

"Yes, we had some beautiful sparring; but no tendency to a hugging round," responded Lord Bayswater, laughing. "Yes, now I have leisure to remember Dame *Alecto*, I believe she did fib me well, as you term it—and, in the same language, I acknowledge I disliked my customer. But, by all means enlist her in your pugilistic files, and you will be safe in betting ten to one upon her *pugnacious* prowess. Heavens! if she is a married dealer in handicuffs, it would prove well for the poor sufferer her *sposo*, were her fists broken off in this pressure."

"Ah my! the buffeter!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd. "What could occasion this assault and battery?"

"Her aim was to cuff me out of the way of impeding her march over Miss Frederick, which she seemed seriously to meditate," replied his lordship; "for, ere she commenced the furious bombardment of my body of defence, she peremptorily commanded me to let her pass, since her way was not to be obstructed by cowardly fainting Misses."

"Zounds! how I should like to have her in a ring, and set my dogs to bait her," exclaimed Lord William.

"Not a gold ring, I presume," said Captain Hawk, smiling.

"Oh, by the peace of Europe! no. But, by the way, she had shackles of gold hung in trinkets around her, sufficient to form a good solid *attelage* for any mercenary, who would not mind being harnessed with a famously restive, unmanageable, fiery steed."

"From this description of your lordship's assailant," said Rosabella, observing some females elbowing their way towards them, "I fear the assault is likely to be renewed; since there can be no doubt

this formidable *gold*-beater is rapidly advancing."

"By all that is militant, it is my gold-beater!" exclaimed Lord Bayswater, laughing; "and with the whole contents of Exeter Change glittering around her."

"And with the *sauvage* part of the concern revelling in her bosom," said Mr. Monson; "for, by all that is ferocious! it is my fair friend of Stable Yard memory, who commanded her charioteer to drive over her fellow beings; and who, if not your lordship's—has at least got my head into chancery."

"Ah my! it is indeed that wild cat," exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, assuming a most comic look of terror, "coming to scratch our eyes out before we have seen the sights."

At this moment the fierce Amazon, with two young women and a youth, rushed to the bench by Lord Bayswater, between whom and Charles Rosa was seated.

"Move on, sir," said the trinket-bearer, authoritatively addressing his lordship;

"Move on:—your party occupy infinitely too much space."

"I grieve our extent of accommodation does not perfectly coincide with your idea of the compressing system, madam; since, by all that is economic in space, we can concrete into nothing more compact in the science of angustation, without machinery to consolidate us into concorporation."

"Young man," replied this irritable fair, "it is evident, most clearly evident, you are not a gentleman; or you would not thus rudely resist the request of a lady."

"A request!! I solicit ten thousand pardons, madam, for my inattention to your request;—but, on honour, I did not hear you make one."

"Not hear it! Not hear my entreaty for your moving on!!"

"Are you not lapsing a little into error, most Serene? Was it not a command issued? not a request uttered. Commands are a sort of mandates I am not exactly in the habit of obeying."

"Insolent! But this affectation of su-

periority does not mislead me; since I at once discovered you were any thing but a gentleman."

"Amazing penetration! Absolutely inspired!"

"All this results from the pay barriers not having been sufficiently secured," said this termagant, most angrily; "and thus the gallery mob has got intermingled with us:—thus all distinction is borne down, and prentice boys, and *canaille* shop-men have taken possession of accommodation they never paid for. As to you, most sneering impertinent! I know your plebeian face full well; for, now I have condescended to demean a look by turning it on you, I perfectly recollect your often serving me at your master's shop."

"Your memory rivals at least your penetration, madam," replied his lordship.

"In this instance, at least, it is equal to my penetration:—for well, perfectly well, I recollect your often serving me; and the very first time I enter your mas-

ter's premises, you may rest assured I shall report you to him."

"You would not, surely, be so unmerciful," exclaimed his lordship, assuming a ludicrous look of piteous alarm.

"Yes," exclaimed the shrew exultingly, "you cannot deny the fact; and now I remember you are a—a—a—

"A pawnbroker, madam, still at your service; for as you bear about you such manifest evidence against me, I must be convicted of often having had dealings with you at my shop," his lordship said, as with mock reverence he bowed to the ornaments she profusely wore; as if he had lived by their egress and regress to and from his master's clutches.

A burst of risibility was elicited by his lordship's acknowledged occupation from all who heard him, and evidently at the trinket *amateur*, whose rage could only be equalled by her mortification; and who remained silent, only from not knowing exactly what reply to make; whilst her companions implored her to

occupy as many seats as were there afforded them, as every other had been seized, whilst she had been contending for more room, to accommodate some expected beaux.

Charles, whose pride was almost incorrigible, yet promptly forgave the degradation of his party, for the mortification this ray of humour's inspiration inflicted on the inhuman as vixenly woman: but poor Mrs. O'Dowd could by no means relish the possibility of being set down for a party of pawnbrokers; and stole many a fearful glance upon her own dress and Lady Meliora's, tremblingly to inspect what part could be set down by those around them for unredeemed pledges; nor was her chagrin diminished, on perceiving the party immediately before her eyeing the supposed pawnbrokers ever and anon, with looks which she construed as those of legible disdain. But when at length she heard one of these scorners deplore to another the great mixture of company to be met with in the pit of the Opera

House, she, in her turn, began mentally to deplore her *stylish costume* having been sacrificed that night, since it had proved no distinguishing mark of her superiority.

At length the shrew caught a view of Charles, whom his own card had announced as an honourable; but she, ever seizing with avidity every opportunity of evincing her prowess in insolence, audibly exclaimed to her companions:

"Absolutely, there is the fellow who assaulted my coachman whilst in the performance of his duty, now in company with a pawnbroker's journeyman!—or, at least—" suddenly recollecting, that to admit his statement to be just, would be to implicate herself, and the grandeur of her adornments—"or at least, the man who merely acknowledged himself of that money-lending tribe, to mislead my complaint to his master. I could have sworn, by the conduct of that fine honourable to our poor Jonathan, that he was a keeper of low company."

The orchestra now poured forth its melody, in the overture to the opera of Aristo-

demo, and our party were too much engaged in attention, to bestow their thoughts or repartees any further upon this contemptible group; and when the opera commenced, and our Hibernians—at least the trio from sequestration in Ravenswood,—for the first time, heard the enchantment of music in a style of perfection, they became breathless with rapturous amaze; and only seemed to live, to gaze, and listen; Lady Meliora even forgetting for the moment herself and thirst for universal admiration, Rosa her varied griefs, and Charles Rosabella;—whilst the three attending squires, unused to simplicity so forcibly, and by the fair young friends so fascinatingly betrayed, became too, all ears and eyes, to listen and to gaze.

But soon the susceptibility of Rosabella experienced a kind of conflict she was unprepared for; awakened by the sensibility of patriotic feeling: for the entrance of an aid-de-camp into the state-box attracted by one sympathetic impulse the whole of that immense audience from their seats,

to receive the Emperor of Russia, King of Prussia, and the Prince Regent of Great Britain, and to hail them with an electric burst of applause. But when our national anthem, called for by innumerable voices, resounded in vocal melody, not only from the full force of the theatrical corps, but from sovereigns and heroes, and from the entire of the multitude assembled, princes and all standing in reverence; no wonder Rosabella, hearing it thus for the first time, save in their own circumscribed family circle at Ravenswood, should be subdued; or that her flowing tears and convulsive sobs became more similar to those of grief than awful joy; through the participation in the natural triumph which dilated the hearts of all around her, in that national pride, that glorious pleasure, that hallowed gratitude, which the presence of those they beheld awakened; since in their presence was proof that warfare was past; the proud, firm, and long unaided struggles they had made for the preservation of Europe, suspended at least, if not wholly terminated.

However, although there appeared no

possibility of movement, yet in the acclamations and bursts of enthusiasm, some motion was effected through the standing files in the pit; for when all came to be reseated, the pugilistic fair found room for the beaux she had made so violent an effort to secure places for; and who had contrived to make their way to her, and to all appearance were most peaceable and respectable young men; one of whom being favoured with a seat by the Amazon herself, Lord Bayswater distinctly heard her say, soon after the patriotic tumult had subsided:

"By the pay barriers having been borne down on the first rush in, there is shocking company in the pit to-night; and I have been peculiarly unlucky in my neighbours."

"Peculiarly lucky, you mean," replied the young man. "Now, if you could but manage to introduce yourself, and make your application, you could not have a better opportunity, to spare your brother a long journey, and get Harry's business settled at once."

"What are you raving about?" demanded the pugilist, looking with sharp interrogation of eye at her neighbour.

"Why, about this golden opportunity of presenting your petition relative to Harry."

"You are beside yourself, Jones. This man next me is a low impertinent fellow, I have had a *brouillerie* with, relative to places."

"The d—l you have! Then, if he discovers you, your son is done for: since that is the Earl of Bayswater; by whose interest alone Harry could obtain that sinecure your brother was so sanguine about possessing."

"Oh!" cried the lady, now alarmed into the gentlest tones, "I shall die with confusion and regret: who could have suspected such an untoward encounter? But, are you certain?"

"Positive. But, let us be wary; and by mentioning no names you may escape detection."

"No, no, every way undone! for that man with him is the identical one we have

commenced a suit against for assaulting our coachman; and through that channel he must discover me. Oh! was there ever so unlucky a coincidence! But how could I divine what stone wall I was running my head against?"

"But, my dear madam, we ought to be wary, when we come in contact with strange premises, lest, as now, the wall may have an unsuspected corner flint to wound with."

"That is too—too true; but of no avail to me will prove repentance; for my husband will go wild about it. But I cannot sit next him any longer, my emotion will betray me. Oh! that I had been tongue-tied, and that all my ungovernable spirit had evaporated in my childhood."

Mr. Jones changed seats with her, who, not finding even this removal far enough from the peer she had assaulted, changed to the outside place of all those occupied by her party; when soon she had the mortifying conviction conveyed to her, of her friend being correct in the identity of her brother's patron; since here she

soon beheld the Prince Regent bow graciously to him; and heard gentlemen standing near her talk of him as Lord Bayswater.

But whilst this termagant woman was deservedly writhing in mortification, and apprehension of peril to her child's prospects, through her own reprehensible violence, Mrs. O'Dowd was made happy, by the renovation of her consequence to all around her, on being rescued from the degrading suspicion of appertaining to a pawnbroker, through the familiar nods and smiles of Lady Flowerdew; who, glittering with gems, was seated in her own box, near to that part of the pit her party occupied; and which evidently appeared to attract and rivet much of the observation of the gentlemen in attendance upon her ladyship.

In the intermediate time, Lord Bayswater, who had heard almost all that had passed between his assailant and her neighbour relative to himself, had promptly made his determination upon the reply he should send to a letter he had that

very morning received from his most respected college tutor, soliciting a sinecure place in his lordship's interest to procure for a nephew, rather defective in intellect, and son to a professional man, with a large and expensive family; who all depended on their father's life for subsistence. This determination was, to reply in firm negative; not for the insolence and unbecoming violence he had been assailed with; for these his understanding led him to despise, whilst the goodness of his heart would have led him to recoil from placing the insults offered to him through the mother's ungovernable temper, as barriers to his procuring a provision for an unfortunate individual, to whom nature had dealt out intellect with a sparing hand: but it was the defects of that mother's heart, which here stood forth as barriers to the son's provision; that inhumanity which led her, in the pursuit of her own gratification, to issue an order that endangered the lives of her fellow beings, and rendered her regardless of the situation terror.

had reduced one of her own sex to;—added to which was the vindictive spirit of both parents, evinced by their prosecution of Mr. Monson. That therefore there was something radically bad in the minds of this family, he felt conviction; and resolved not to befriend such, whilst many an amiable individual might be found to require his aid, to rear and provide for their offspring, and not to purchase trinkets.

It is impossible for us to describe the effect the varied scene of this evening had upon the minds of our three novices, not only in the world of fashion, but in extended society. Few, like them, were taken almost at once from the closest confines of secluded life, and set down in the most splendid theatre of Great Britain; filled, as it then was, with sovereigns, princes, heroes, and statesmen, of the most celebrated fame; with the flower of the nobility of many nations, attired with splendor of surpassing wealth; and to behold a performance of the most showy brilliancy. Our readers can there-

fore more readily conceive than we convey any idea of the sensations that assailed them: but in Fairy Land, or the Arabian territories, under the guiding fancy of the Sultaness Scheherazade, they must have believed themselves, had not their hearts, their proudly patriotic hearts, whispered they were in Britain, the country of which they were loyal subjects; and that there was something more sober, more solid, in mental delight, than in all the glittering allurements of gaudy fancy.

But although superb was the scene, and magnificent the ideas it patriotically awakened, yet, like every scene in mortal life, its grandeur, its attraction, its sentimental ebullitions could not save it from termination. It came to its close, and the difficulty was to be encountered, of the departure of such a multitude, and to consign the late gay scene of all this brilliancy, this splendor, this harmony, this enthusiasm, this animation, to a dark void, still, even as the mansions of the dead.

CHAPTER V.

It was fortunate that such an assemblage found no necessity for a rush out, as they had been propelled to a rush in :—therefore, although difficult, the gradual departure was not like the tide of entrance; and whilst slowly now diverging from the late centre of attraction, Rosabella was carefully protected by Lord Bayswater, since Charles, not a little annoyed by the compulsion, necessarily found himself called upon to undertake the care of Mrs. O'Dowd, as no other gentleman of their party appeared disposed to save him that task; and in the pauses they were compelled to make in their passage out, many *traits* of character and of human nature broke on their ears, amazing to Rosa, amusing to Lord Bayswater.

One young lady they heard exclaim, with a contemptuous toss of her head,

in reply to a gentleman who had just spoken to her at the moment Lord Bayswater and our heroine came in contact with her—

"Oh no, sir, no. It was the most *lourde* assembly you ever dozed at. Why, the servants had perfect space to wander about with refreshments, the company to sit, stand, or move, as inclination prompted; and there was but one carriage polled, and ours only just received a contemptible graze on a door pannel.—Did you ever hear of such *sombre* doings? Oh! if they catch me there again, may I be petrefied."

In the next stationary moment, they heard a young lady call across an intervening party to another, rather in the vale of years—

"Are you for church to-morrow, Lady Mary? Shall I call for you?"

"For church!!!" exclaimed Lady Mary, in a tone of as much astonishment as if she had been asked was she for Charon's ferry.—"Heavens! my dear girl, how

came you to think of church—of all places?"

"Oh! ma'am, because I conclude the allied sovereigns will go in state to the Chapel Royal to morrow."

"O—h, true. Well, in that case, you may call, my dear; and I'll exert my energies in an endeavour to be ready."

"Well," cried an elderly man, amid the throng, ostentatiously to his companion—"well, that is a thing I always do, at least in the country; I always frequent church for example's sake."

"Just as your poor son," his companion replied, "has been forced to lower his appetite to meet the times, as an *example* to his nine lovely children."

"Haw!" responded the *exemplary* man, with the most perfect *nonchalance*; "so the world goes, my friend.—Some have too much—some too little."

At length they reached the Hall, where they were doomed to a long sojourn, in patient waiting for their carriage to be announced; and where numerous personages

exchanged greetings with Lord Bayswater and Lord William; and not a few of whom inquired who their lovely companions were.

And now, as our party stood performing lords and ladies in waiting, Mrs. O'Dowd, in painful anxiety, observing the descent from the boxes, and in high alarm lest Lady Flowerdew had vanished ere she had emerged from the pit; a lady suddenly turned from speaking to an acquaintance, and said to a young woman near them,—

"Lucy, have you spoken to the Becks?"

"No, mama," replied Lucy; "you desired me, you know, never to pretend to see them, or any homespun acquaintance, when we were in high company; and so, to night, as Lady Uphill was on one side of us, and Sir Peter and Lady Downdale on the other, and that they were so monstrous sociable with us, of course I would not see the Becks; but, I assure you, I had an immensity of trouble to manœuvre my escape from seeing them."

"Hush, child! don't shout so loud; the people around you can hear, although you could not see to night: but now it will be necessary to see them, since neither the Uphills nor Downdales offered to take us home; and Mr. Friendly, who was my last resource in high life, has just told me he must walk home, as his coachman is ill.—Hold, manage well, the Becks are opportunely drawing nearer."

"Oh! bless me," cried Lucy, taking a hoyden hop, step, and jump, to meet a very quiet looking party just approaching ours.—"Oh! bless me, my dear Mrs. Beck, which did you drop from, the moon or the stars?"

"My drop was not one of much magnitude, Miss Vere," replied Mrs. Beck, with rather a stately air; "I sat just near you."

"Oh! over us, I suppose: we sat so near the boxes we could not see you.—But, how lucky you were to get a box!—My dear Fanny, and Jane, how do you? but I need not ask, you look so monstrous well. What have you both been about to

make yourselves look even handsomer than ever?"

"No, Miss Vere," said Mrs. Beck, "I was not in the boxes; I sat in the pit, not six yards from you; and, although myself and girls nodded our poor heads almost off to you and Mrs. Vere, neither of you could see us."

"La! now, Mrs. Beck, how could you expect us to see any thing but the dear emperor? I am sure I never did, nor could, take my eyes off him. — And there too has Lady Susan Pique just been rowing me like mad, for not returning her bow. But, la! I did not come here to look after my acquaintance, I'll honestly own it, for I can gape after them any day. I came here at the hazard of my life to gaze at crowned heads. Why now, had your son been here, handsome and charming as he is, I should never have seen him, since my head was turned to, and by, the fascinating Alexander."

"Well, well, since you candidly confess your head turned by the emperor," said Mrs. Beck, softened from her displea-

sure by the praise of her dashing boy's beauty; "we must not feel hurt at your not seeing us:—But how do you go home, my dear?"

"Home, ma'am!—I declare I never asked mama; but suppose in chairs."

"You had better allow us the pleasure of setting you down, my dear."

"You are very good; and I am sure mama will be vastly obliged if she has made no other arrangement."

Mama, now instructed by the freemasonry of Miss Lucy that all was settled, condescendingly joined Mrs. Beck, to be conveyed home by her, who obligingly went at least two miles out of her way for this accommodating purpose.

And now the anxiety and alarm of Mrs. O'Dowd was happily terminated: "Lady Flowerdew's carriage stops the way," resounded through her delighted ears; and soon her delighted eyes beheld her ladyship begin her descent of the stairs; who, promptly perceiving our party, hastened to them—

"Well, my lords," she exclaimed,

" you two are never out of your way.—If there is beauty to be met with on the surface of the globe, in seeking you, we find it.—And now, do not think this is my remark only, for it has been made upon you by a dozen envious men at least to night. My dear Miss Frederick, I should have sent a very handsome ambassador to negotiate for your joining me, could I have accommodated all your party; for I do like attractive luminaries in my sphere.—My honey! introduce me to Lady Meliora Monson, and the gentleman whom, from resemblance, I pronounce her brother; and then persuade yourself and them, and our sweet Rosa, as I have engaged the rest of your attending squires, to accompany me home to a *petit soupé*.

Mrs. O'Dowd performed the requested introduction, and then announced—" that none of her immediate flock could have the honor of accepting her ladyship's invitation, since Lady Derville, who was rather an invalide, would sit up to receive them, as well as to examine whether they

had come by their deaths in the throng they had encountered."

"That is really untoward," said Lady Flowerdew, "as I cannot venture any kind of extended invitation whilst these meteors are passing over our favoured isle. But good night then, for I must fly, lest they should do me the favour of wheeling off my carriage. My lords, and Captain Hawk, I shall expect to see you when dismissed from attendance."

Lady Derville's carriage being the very next announced, our party followed her ladyship immediately out of the Opera House; when Lords Bayswater and William Rentlorn and Captain Hawk, having aided in safely conveying the ladies they had charge of to their carriages, bade them adieu, with many expressions of regret at their happiness not being prolonged by meeting at Lady Flowerdew's.

"Charles," said Lady Melora, "I think, might have gone to Mansfield Street, although grandmama might have been hurt if we had."

"Why, no," replied Mr. Monson, "as matters now stand between us, I wish to see her to-night.—My head cannot rest on my pillow whilst I am at warfare with those I love."

"This seems to imply, that my dear brother, when he does see her, will be more temperate than he seemed inclined to be on meeting to-day," said Lady Meliora.

"It certainly implies your brother's wish.—But all depends on her reception of me."

"Yet, should that unfortunately prove an ill-advised one," said Rosa gently, "will you too, Charles, act upon a principle of error, to prolong a distressing disunion, so torturing to the affections of yourself and Lady Derville?"

"And, my good Sir," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "cannot your sagacity discern, that *Brûleur* Sternham is running hard to explode you out of grandmama's good favour, that he may carry on his wildgoose plan of winning this damsel, without your unpalatable sarcasms? Will you now allow

him the triumph of succeeding—perhaps with Rosa and all?"

"I cannot promise," Charles replied, "to make my temper amenable to Mr. Sternham's management of my grandmother; who, if left to her own free agency, would be one of the most benign and amiable amongst women; the friend and companion of her grand-children; the idol of all who were in habits of intimacy with her. But I will promise you to endeavour to subdue my ungovernable spirit into something of subjection, to enable me to bear the government of Mr. Sternham without such furious rebellion: but to behold all our domestic comforts and happiness overthrown by a designing hypocrite, who, in the sacred garb in which he performs his treacherous politics, becomes a dire assassin to the profession he profanes, and not evince some indignation at it, would be impossible.—And if I do indeed effect, in any degree, this promise of the subjugation of my fiery impetuosity, it will prove a magnanimous effort of forbearance; since my feelings have been pain-

fully assailed through the scenes of this evening; for as I beheld the exulting patriotic enthusiasm around me, how I writhed at my own insignificance; since of all this honour, this glory, I bore no part in the promotion."

"Nor did the babes unborn, my honey!" said Mrs. O'Dowd, "and yet, many a one of those yet unthought-of Britons will plume themselves, I warrant, upon the glories of the present period, and feel its triumph as reflected upon them."

"But how many hundreds, think you, Mr. Monson, were present to-night, inspired with the general enthusiasm, who, like you, from want of power,—not of inclination, had as little share in the promotion of our present glories, as any of our immediate party?" said Rosabella.

"You forget Captain Hawk, who has been in many of the battles, formed one of our party, Rosa; so you must exempt him," said Lady Meliora.

"And you forget, my dear, how I lent my husband, to fight ships, and be shot at

in the contest: so you must exempt me," said Mrs. O'Dowd.

They now reached Albemarle Street, and found only Mr. Sternham up, of all their party.

"Grandmama is not gone to bed, from indisposition, I trust," exclaimed Lady Meliora.

"From indisposition to sit in the same room with an individual of your party, until he has condescended to make a proper apology, for his late disrespectful conduct—not from bodily ailment, Lady Meliora."

The fine bloom of Mr. Monson deepened to the fullest tint of carmine.

"And Lord Derville, Sir,—has he too, retired, for some equally judicious purpose?" demanded Lady Meliora, very much distressed at her grandmother's impolitic conduct.

"Retired to dream of Miss Vandelure, I presume," Mr. Sternham replied, in a flippantly vivacious tone; for he had, in consequence of the hints Lady Meliora and

Mrs. O'Dowd had favored him with that day, been practising efforts at proving irresistible, during his last hour of solitude, to assail the heart of Rosabella when she returned; and now, with the innovation of an adorning smile on his iron countenance, he pranced up to our heroine with the ludicrous agility of a buffoon comedian in a modern farce, and with an attempt at taking her hand, said—

"Come lovely Rose, more sweet and beauteous than those your garland is perfumed by, tell me how you relished,—your highly gifted mind relished, those frivolities which you partook of, in this to me most long and dreary evening?"

"So very much, Sir," responded Rosabella, precipitately withdrawing her hand, and snatching up a bed-light, "that I am all anxiety to seek my pillow, ere the delightful scenes can vanish from my vision, that fancy may repeat them for me in my dreams: therefore I wish you a good night, Sir,—Mrs. O'Dowd,—Mr. Monson, *bon soir*. Lady Meliora, I cannot linger for you to the destruction of my project, since

it is your intention to take a sandwich."

Charles, although grieved at losing her now but too anxiously coveted society, forgave his own privation in his enjoyment of Mr. Sternham's disappointment; and almost ready to betray his risibility, at the ludicrous dismay the countenance of the unlover-like suitor portrayed, at a prank, which Rosabella's disgust at his bombastic familiarity inspired, flew to open the door for her, and as he did so, softly articulated—

"And in your dreams too, lovely *Rose*, remember the man who will stand forth—if ever the panted for power is yielded to him—the most determined, as most attached, of all your numerous suitors."

But this charge to Rosa's dreaming fancies was one but little calculated to promote the power of compliance; and with a sigh from her sorrowfully sympathizing bosom, she retired to her chamber,—not to dream of Charles and his hopes, but in waking sadness, to think upon his unfortunate attachment, and her own.

As none of the remaining trio had much

relish for the society of Mr. Sternham, their light banquet was not long extended, nor their moment of separation for the night long protracted; when Charles, proceeding to his chamber, unfortunately found it pre-occupied by Mr. Foxcraft—whom Lord Derville omitted to apprise of his brother's return—when, believing this disposition of his apartments was by order of his grandmother, through the influence of her chaplain, to evince she would have an apology made for an offence, that her injudicious violence had precipitated him into the commission of—he became at once more firmly determined than before, never to apologize for what he had done; and in a paroxysm of indignant feeling he rushed out of the house, and sought a lodging, where he had found accommodation the preceding night.

CHAPTER VI.

When the breakfast party assembled the following morning, and Mr. Foxcraft, and no Charles appeared, Lady Derville in alarm inquired for her grandson, and the distressing intelligence was conveyed to her,—

"That when Mr. Monson wished to retire, and found his chamber preoccupied, he ordered his own valet, 'to inform Mr. Freecastle, that he knew where to find him;' and then hurried out of the house."

Lady Derville was now thrown into the utmost consternation; and, whilst tears arose to her eyes, she cast upbraiding glances, alternately, on Mr. Sternham and Lord Derville, the one for persuading her to a continuance of hostility with this impetuous young man; the other, for permitting any one to take possession of apartments, to the exclusion of his brother; since both,

she feared, had tended to his self-banishment, to hazard she knew not what of evil.

Mr. Foxcraft endeavoured at plausible apologies, for occupying Mr. Monson's chamber so unopportunely, through total ignorance of his return; and Lord Derville strove to excuse his forgetfulness, in not giving his friend the necessary intimation, by the plea of no man in love ever having a retentive memory. But nothing could tranquillize the mind of the anxious parent, who in evident depression of spirits set out to attend her sacred duties at St. George's church; and, on her return from thence, she was summoned to a private conference with Mr. Sternham, in which he set forth the incalculable injury she would do her grandson, and injustice to her own authority, did she relax towards Mr. Monson without becoming concessions on his part, with such plausibility, yet such sophistry, that her ladyship, long used to place implicit faith in his judgment, and concluding him as usual right in his decision, took no trouble to analyze his reasoning;

and, in compliance with his inflexible measures, unfortunately yielded up her judicious intention of writing a conciliating letter to her grandson.

But, to fulfil her intention of accompanying Mrs. O'Dowd, to call this morning upon Lady Flowerdew, Lady Derville found herself wholly unequal; and therefore she instructed her grand-daughter in what apology she was to make for her.

"Is Rosa to remain with you, or go with us?" demanded Lady Meliora.

"Oh, she must accompany you.—Mr. Sternham is going to wait upon the Bishop of ———," replied Lady Derville; who felt the greatest anxiety to be left alone, in the hope, that Charles might return during the absence of all, that she might give him a reception something less frigid than Mr. Sternham had arranged.

The three ladies now set off in the landau of Lady Derville, to Mansfield Street; and, to the great pleasure of all, they found Lady Flowerdew, and the Miss Lorrains, just returned from church.

After some little time passed in the

common chit-chat of the day, Lady Flowerdew requested Lady Meliora and Miss Frederick to excuse her absence a short period, as she wished much to show a portrait to her *honey*, of an old friend, whom they had both regarded in days of yore; and then hastened to her *boudoir*, with Mrs. O'Dowd, who, the moment they were enclosed there, inquired—

"Whose picture she was come to see?"

"A mere excuse," her ladyship replied, "to make an opportunity to ask you a few questions, upon the freedom of our former friendship.—Do you know accurately the fortune of Lady Meliora Monson; or have you any supposition of what it really is,—not its calculation in the future tense?"

"Why, absolutely, by marriage settlement twenty thousand pounds sterling are her portion; bearing interest from the period of her father's decease; half to reimburse the expenses of her education, maintenance, &c., the moiety to accumulate until the expiration of her minority: but from the calculation of that for you I must beg to be excused, my *honey!*"

"I do not require it; and I thank you sincerely for your information. A young relative of my Lord's, whom hereditary and individual extravagance has rather embarrassed, had her pointed out to him as a much higher prize, than by your account she is. But perhaps, as he admires her exceedingly, it might be a prudent measure, to let him try his fortune with her, in the hope of her domesticating him.—Yet I know not what to say to that—She is untried in the path of *ton*; and Heaven only knows, what turn she may take."

"Probably, not a domestic one," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "from the total seclusion in which she has been reared."

"Most probably; and her extreme volatility seems to sanction that belief; but pray, may I ask what affinity that enchanting Rosa bears to the Derville family?"

"Why exactly as to that," replied Mrs. O'Dowd, "the only relatives I can positively affirm to be hers are all the Christian charities, with every virtue under Heaven; for, indeed, I never intimately knew so sweet a creature: but as to who

she is, I really know not. I have heard a rumour, of some mystery attending her birth: and to own the honest truth, I suspect that mystery is made out by the prudent Dowager, to rescue the immaculacy of her son from suspicion; since persons there are, who suppose this to be a little illegitimate of his, who was dissipated enough, by all accounts, to sanction the belief. The dowager never proclaiming who Rosa was, further than being a ward of hers, and the late lord's name being Frederick, make strong presumptive evidence; to which may be superadded, the horror Lady Derville has ever betrayed, at the possibility of either of her grandsons imbibing the tender passion for her: and now this dire apprehension being, I fear, in the high road to be realized, in the bosom of Mr. Monson, causes an almost frenzied anxiety in her ladyship, to force the sweet girl into a precipitate marriage with a kind of terrific hobgoblin, that would effectually scare a nursery into passiveness; which adds considerable force to my suspicions."

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed Lady Flowerdew, "how shocking all this is, if these suspicions of their affinity are just.—But, tell me, is the affliction to be added to the calamity of the sweet girl's affections also flowing into this horribly interdicted channel? She has that touching pensiveness about her, of one whose heart was hopelessly attached."

"Why no," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "I am certain, she has no *tendresse* for Mr. Monson, although a strong sisterly regard for him; but, I think the probability is, she has some suspicion of their affinity, and of his attachment, which in every turn I see her strenuous, though mournful efforts to repel."

"How I do wish," said Lady Flowerdew, "I could devise some measure, to relieve the dear girl from this perseeution, relative to this *hobgoblin*; for she interests me beyond measure. If Lady Derville would have a moment's patience, she might find other husbands, ready to snatch her out of the way of Mr. Monson, not so terrific as the one you describe. In-

deed, I have some suspicion, she has made a deeper impression upon the heart of a young friend of mine, than I thought he would ever experience, until sobering into the steady day of life.—I mean Lord Bayswater, who came here from the Opera last night in a most suspicious mood, putting many questions to me, indicative of intense interest relative to her.—As to fortune, his lordship is so lucky, as not to require any in a wife; and so disinterested, as not to seek one: but this illegitimacy I rather fear would prove an insurmountable impediment, were even all others removed; for he has many ideas that the tolerating world might call fastidious, for he remembers the sins of the parent in the child; and I have known him turn at a ball, in absolute recoiling disgust, from dancing with the daughter of a frail mother, and, in preference, select the homely offspring of a lady renowned for the propriety of her conduct through life."

"But, my honey!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, now ready to cry with vexation

at having been so communicative—"I have no proof whatever of Rosa's illegitimacy. I only drew my conclusions from the surmises of a gossiping neighbourhood; and possibly, nay probably, they are all unfounded."

"No, no," replied her ladyship, "they seem too probable to be unfounded; but, as I am not quite so fastidious as a romantic young poet, I shall feel most anxious to devise some project to ameliorate this interesting girl's situation. And now, as I have heard some potent assaulting of my street door since we left our young friends, if you please, we will return to them."

Lady Flowerdew found the party she had left augmented by the arrival of Lady Townhurst, Lady Wilemore and niece, Lord Bayswater, Mr. Monson, and Captain Hawk.

The moment their meeting civilities were past, Lady Townhurst, a very pretty splendidly attired young woman, said—

"I find, dear Lady Flowerdew, these

great personages go to Woolwich to-morrow by water. I should vastly like to venture. Will it be style to go?"

"Certainly not, unless you go in their suite," said Lady Flowerdew.

"Dear, I am monstrous sorry for that, as I had quite set my heart on procuring a boat and going, as the Frisketts mean to go, in dashing style; but they have been monstrous lucky,—they have seen every one of the great folks twice a day at least, and have had as many shakes by the hand as Miss Standard herself. And all this notice seems like victuals and drink to them, for they appear to live upon it; and are so proud of it, they are quite aggravating; and I really dread the meeting them, they are so full of their tantalizing boasts, that it makes me almost ready to cry for vexation."

Lady Flowerdew, who dearly loved a little arch mischief, by sometimes hurling consequential people from their vaunted pre-eminence, or by leading the absurd deeper into the ridiculous; now, believing

Lady Wilemore had been boasting of imperial notice, and her success in the royal chase, replied—

"Indeed, I do not wonder, Lady Townhurst, that you should be ready to shed tears at your intimate friends proclaiming themselves of the *volgo*.—How, in the name of common sense, can they commit themselves so as to boast of not being in the higher circles, since persons of any fashion must, in the common orbit of their sphere, encounter these bright luminaries? We need not deviate from our way to behold and mingle with them.—It is only the common herd that are compelled to the toil of seeking them, and the *canaille* only who grabble for this manual honour. —Permission to kiss the hand of a sovereign is distinction, but the contact of hands, shared with the multitude, is surely no elevation."

Mrs. O'Dowd's cheeks flushed to a crimson tint, and her heart beat the pit-a-pat of self-congratulation, that she had fortunately, through lack of opportunity, es-

caped committing herself by any boast of imperial distinction received with the common mob.

Poor Lady Townhurst, finding this had been an unlucky tack, resolved to pursue a more secure course; and, after taking up a book she found on a table near her, and turning over the leaves with apparent interest, said—

"I know your taste and judgment, Lady Flowerdew, are so *superficial* *, that I am anxious you should regulate my studies. Do condescend to recommend some books to me."

"Books!!" exclaimed Lady Flowerdew, converting her inclination to risibility, into a tone of astonishment—"Really you quite overpower my *superficiality* by your request; and, could I comply with it, would it be to any purpose? What *belle* of *ton* could find opportunity for study in London?"

"Alinda contrives to read an immen-

* It is presumed the fortunate country maid meant —superexcellent.

sity, and even sound solid reading for improvement," exclaimed Lady Wilemore.

"You absolutely amaze me!" said Lady Flowerdew, opening her brilliant eyes to an unusual dilation, to attest that amazement. "Well, if I can contrive to wade through my opera books twice a week, my diurnal piles of visiting literature, with the fashionable arrivals and departures, and such lady-interesting information, in the popular newspapers, I consider I have achieved feats in study.—Come, my Lord Pindarus, you, who know all the female literati of the day,—you, with whom the whole *bas bleu* world are confessedly enamoured, tell us how their improvement during a London season reports progress."

"Why, it is whispered," said his lordship, gravely, "that Lady Lampwick's journal reports her having made herself mistress of the etymology of Idleness; Miss Porefolio's states her having analyzed a practical experimental treatise upon the anatocism of monies funded in the faro-bank; Lady Sappho Skimpage's announces her having translated several cantoes of

gallantry legends from obscure and almost incomprehensible characters, into plain intelligible English; Miss Cornelia Suckletter's intimates her having only found leisure to correct and revise a very few pages of the voluminous work, entitled—'A Key to Scandal's Chronicle, for one thousand eight hundred and fourteen,' which she finds a key too intricate in its formation to perform its task with that facility the curious in keys require; whilst Mrs. Bibliographica Blatta's (the most inverate *bas bleu* of the age) shows her having advanced no farther than the exposition of the table of fashionable expenditure, the completion of which study to be made at her leisure, not by any algebraical rule, but in the rules of the court, if not of the King's Bench."

"I perceive your lordship does not favour female mental acquirement," said Lady Wilemore.

"O, pardon me," exclaimed Lord Bayswater, with a serious look of profound homage as he bowed, "who but must favour

all that has conspired to form a *Standard* of *Perfection?*"

This complimentary homage was performed so exactly to please Lady Wilemore's angling propensity, that she considered this an auspicious moment for commencing the speculation her mind was full of, and manœuvre to obtain tickets for the ball, to be given by the members of White's Club to the illustrious strangers.

"Pray," she carelessly demanded, "do you go to the ball at White's, Lady Flowerdew?"

"I fully intend it."

"My lord is a subscriber I suppose."

"He is not a member of White's."

"Is it fair, or admissible, to inquire how you obtained your ticket?"

"By merely accepting it when kindly offered to me."

"La! Cecilia, how lucky you always are!—I have no acquaintance amongst the members of White's that I know of; and so, I suppose, my poor Alinda must break her heart at home that night,—or rather

I shall break mine in sympathy for her, since she is a perfect philosopher upon such trying occasions. If one could but have anticipated all these events, I should have coaxed Sir Gilbert to become a member, that he might have subscribed for this wonderful *fête*. But, of course, it is too late to accomplish this now."

"I have not a doubt of there being fully sufficient time," said Lady Flowerdew, wishing to see how her friend would extricate herself from this pretence. "The expense will be so immense, I have been told from good authority, they will be glad to receive members, to increase their subscribers, so there is quite time enough for it."

"Ay, for Sir Gilbert to become a member, and to subscribe," replied this able general; who was as expert at retreat as advance: "but not for *me* to coax him into the measure. You, who are a wife, must know what restive animals husbands sometimes are, and what management is necessary to lure them on to any particular

point they wish to shun: and Sir Gilbert has such an antipathy to all foreigners, that, now I give this matter a second thought, I question, if I had months to coax him in, whether I should be able to succeed in luring him into any thing to pay them homage. So that, poor dear, meek, and patient Alinda, you are thrown out of this gala every way, I fear, unless we can manage a petition to some kind member to compassionate an amiable—and *gents*, may I not add, lovely young woman? and her worthy aunt.—Not but that I really would permit her to go with a proper *chaperon*, if I could not myself procure a ticket."

Lady Flowerdew, now having answered her own purpose in prolonging this speculation for tickets, wished to hear nothing further upon the subject, and turned to Mrs. O'Dowd, who she knew dearly loved to have her dress admired, to express her approbation of her spencer.

Lady Wilemore having set her speculation trap here, now arose to take her

departure, to go and perform the same manœuvres in every possible direction likely to succeed.

Lady Townhurst, quite crest-fallen at her errors relative to the illustrious visitors, and to her wish for studying in London, now arose to take leave; when Lady Flowerdew, who, although she loved to make sport withal, possessed too amiable a heart to inflict mental wounds, except upon the assuming or unworthy, told her in a whisper,—"She might go to Woolwich by water, without annihilation to her consequence in the world of fashion.

"But only do not talk of your efforts or anxiety, to behold these meteors;" she added, "lest people should imagine their orbit was out of your sphere: and read, with all your powers for improvement, as much as you can seize opportunity for; but do not boast of it, as the Standard's aunt does for her."

Captain Hawk having no title to dazzle Lady Meliora with, he wished to try what deeds in arms might effect, since women, he knew, in general, paid homage to va-

lour; and was eager to speak of battles he had bled in, if he could, by the generalship of introducing the subject to compliment her ladyship's country, intimate his own proud share in the heroic feats performed in Europe.

"But Mrs. O'Dowd," he said, the moment after Lady Townhurst's departure, "why condescend to wear colours in compliment to any heroes but your own countrymen? Why not, my dear madam, step forward with the intrepidity of your own warriors, and set fashions of your own?—Sport an emerald green spencer, decorated with trimming imitative of the shamrock and laurel, and wear it in honour of the unconquered Wellington, Pakenham, Cole, Beresford, and a long list of not only generals but colonels too; amongst the latter of whom I place first the gallant Montalbert, under whose command I have fought and bled."

And now Captain Hawk branched off into the wide field of honour, where, whilst he was ostensibly sounding forth the trump of fame for Lord Montalbert, in detailing

the different battles that gallant noble had signalized himself in, he craftily let all present know the extent of his own services; but, like many a self-deceiver, whilst he fancied he was covertly conveying ammunition into the heart of the citadel for his future attack, he was only toiling to make more secure the triumph of his rival: for when, at length, Mrs. O'Dowd made her parting compliments to Lady Flowerdew to proceed to Hyde Park, Lady Meliora departed, with her heart full of the exploits of the heroic Montalbert, and more than half determined never to permit the least particularity from Lord William, Captain Hawk, or any other man, save Lord Montalbert; but to envelope herself in the armour of constancy, and elevate every thought to her adoration of this phenomenon of valour.

CHAPTER VII.

When Charles handed the last of the three ladies into the carriage of his grandmother, he wished them a good day.

"Heavens, Charles!" exclaimed his sister, sparing one thought to him from Lord Montalbert—"surely you are not in earnest forsaking your family!—What new friends and connexions can you be forming?"

"I am not to be catechised by you, Lady Meliora, nor do I understand by what authority you arrogate to yourself the liberty of doing so," he haughtily replied.

"Oh, Mr. Monson!" Rosabella exclaimed, in a tone of such affectionate, such touching interest, that it instantaneously drew Charles into the coach.

"I will accompany you any where but to Albemarle Street," he said: "but

there I will never return, unless dragged thither by the mandate of the Lord Chancellor: since Lady Derville first turned me out of her carriage to make way for Mr. Sternham; and next, turned me from beneath the same roof with her, by giving my chamber to an utter stranger,—a fellow picked up in the packet-boat by my brother, who, thanks to the system we were reared by, knows no more than he did in his cradle how to discriminate characters; and who, in him, may have taken a swindler to his friendship, to rob him of his property, or carry off his sister."

"But the unfortunate circumstance of the preoccupation of your chamber was totally without Lady Derville's knowledge, who concluded your brother had informed Mr. Foxcraft of your return," said Rosa.

"And your brother places the whole fault of this untoward business, my *honey*," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "to his memory having been completely gobbled up by Cupid, and that Dutch girl, who have

resolved, in conjunction, to make mince-meat of his poor heart."

"Or a *pigeon* pye," returned Charles. "I own, I have no opinion of any thing that results through the management of Mr. Foxcraft:—for can you consider the man a son of rectitude, who climbs the ladder to your friendship by paying homage to, and encouraging your foibles? —Mrs. O'Dowd, you are now behind the scenes of our family drama, therefore I need not scruple to deplore before you the unnatural propensity in a man so young, which overshadows all his many—many amiable qualities——his—Oh! it makes my heart sick even to name it—his ungenial, ignoble avarice. And by this dire passion Mr. Foxcraft winds his way; —this he flatters, this he feeds, and this he increases.—And, for what? Must it not evidently be for some sinister purpose?—But I have wandered from the subject of my own grievances. Admitted, for as you affirm it, Rosa, it is so; that Mr. Foxcraft's possession of my chamber last night was without Lady Derville's

knowledge; yet I must suppose the message implied to me, in the cause assigned by Mr. Sternham for her ladyship's retiring last night, was not without her sanction."

"Indeed I should not feel much astonished, if it was," said Rosabella.

"Why then, in that case, what is left for me to do?" responded Charles. "Must I degrade myself by submitting to the arbitrary management of such an apostate from truth and honour, as he is? Or, must I, forgetful of that sacred function he profanes, lead him by the nose out of the house, to prevent his leading my infatuated grandmother by the nose in it? Why should he return with us to Ravenswood, and thus infuriate her into governing all around her with his iron rod: we shall have an insurrection in the very household and amongst the tenantry, and be massacred in our beds."

"Heaven preserve you all!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, turning pale with alarm. "But I would never return to Ravenswood with an executioner in your suite; and Rosa, my honey! if ever you are be-

witched into marrying him, your life will absolutely not be worth a week's purchase; for if you were to live with him, you would be murdered."

"Oh! talk not of such a horrible possibility as Rosa's marrying him!" exclaimed Charles, snatching the hand of our heroine with tremulous agitation; "for, could I for one moment suppose such a dire sacrifice possible, I should run distracted."

"But, Mr. Monson," said the distressed and blushing Rosabella, gravely withdrawing her hand; "had you not better commission your sister, or Mrs. O'Dowd, to make up this unfortunate disagreement with your affectionate and amiable grandmother; and not allow the influence of a selfish politician to widen the breach, until it becomes of too great magnitude easily to be effected. Oh! that the Bishop of —— was returned. He is the pastor fitted to his function. His life is the illustration of the beauties of the Christian character: and who, on beholding in him the gentle but unfaltering guide, formed

by the Master's precepts, but must yield to his opinions? He soon would convince Lady Derville, that her counsellor is unworthy of her confidence;—that parents should blend friendship and affection with admonition and authority; and that home should be formed into the earthly Heaven of their offspring,—not the spot of iron coercion for every juvenile transgression."

"For mercy's sake, dear Rosa, say all this to grandmama yourself," exclaimed Lady Meliora; "and with every one of the maxims of that heavenly bishop, your retentive memory supplies appropriate to the subject."

"My dear Meliora," replied our heroine, "you forget, that neither my years nor situation sanction my taking such a liberty with Lady Derville."

"How singularly unfortunate is our situation, Mrs. O'Dowd!" said Charles, deeply sighing. "Competent indeed should the individuals be to the sacred task confided to them, who undertake the personal guardianship of youth; since it is to the erroneous system of our rearing,

we are indebted for those misfortunes which lower over us, even in this our early day of life. Almost from our birth we have been consigned to total seclusion, to secure us from the evils of contagious example in the path of vice; nor ever taught the important lesson of self-government, or the power of resisting temptation: and in this ill-judged sequestration, we have been despoiled of those salutary instructions to be derived from a well-directed intercourse with society; from the sacrifices to be made of whims and prejudices to the comfort of others and the customs of the world; from those incidental rubs and mortifications, that awaken us to a knowledge of ourselves; whilst our very foibles were nurtured by those around us, who, becoming used to them, saw them not; nor could contrast with others operate to a remembrance of them: whilst our absolute faults were permitted to gather strength through the fatal indulgence or tolerating indolence of our too partial grandmother; or hardened into inveterate obstinacy by the

austere severity of the man, who was selected to rear us into Christians on our pilgrimage to eternity.

"And in that fatal seclusion we have passed our lives, inferior even to the zoophyte genus,—for they embellish, or are useful in their appropriate station:—whilst we, who were formed as intellectual beings, arose to do no man good by the kind or utile acts of fellowship; and we retired to our pillows, only to exclaim with the Emperor Titus—'My friends, I have lost a day.'—And in that retirement, Mrs. O'Dowd, we made no friends,—since we were deprived of even acquaintance. Our family connections all dropped off through neglect, or repellency to overtures for intercourse; and now at length we are launched upon the wide, the deep, the dangerous ocean of life; we find ourselves without ballast, steersman, rudder, or compass; our commander in the toils of our enemy; and we, with our widely swelling sails of juvenile hope, expectation, passion, and inexperience, all unfurled, without one able pilot to guide us into a harbour of

safety. — Rosa!—dear,—dearest Rosa!—Meliora, my sister! weep not, I conjure you both. Your tears will quite subdue my fortitude, and I must fly from beholding what I cannot endure. Come, come, my own two beloved sisters, perhaps I have painted my picture in colours too doleful; and in Hope's perspective we may view it in brightening tints. Now that is a dear good Rosa; although your susceptibility is ever alive to sympathy, your firmness is ever obedient to your summons. Come, now you have suppressed those tears, can you tell me where in France your bishop is?"

"No, but drawing near the coast, since Lady Elstow informed me, he might soon be expected in England."

"But in the intervening time," said Mrs. O'Dowd, fully awake to the remembrance of the lady she had seen in the hackney-coach with Charles,—"all this disunion must be put a period to if possible; since this withdrawing from your family, in a place like London, and inexperienced as you are, Mr. Monson, is

teeming with danger. Sharpers and villains of every description lie in wait with plausible wiles at every corner to mislead you."

"Oh! surely *not* in *London*;—*not* in *England*, my dear madam," said Charles, endeavouring to smile, and to shake off some sort of uneasy sensation he could define no cause for, which her speaking of the perils his absenting himself from home was replete with had awakened.

"Why, as to that," Mrs. O'Dowd replied, her partiality to England, quite panic-struck at the forgetfulness of its influence she had thus evinced; "you know persons from all nations assemble here. Sharks and sirens, from all the quarters of the globe, swim hither in pursuit of prey."

Charles now blushed, and the uneasy sensation seemed painfully to increase; although to him its source remained inexplicable.

"Well," said he, passing his hand over his face, to conceal the variation in his bloom, "although I must grant that perils may assail me, whilst driven from

the sheltering ægis of my guardian; I must weather them as I can, until the dictatorship of Mr. Sternham terminates."

"But I must and will contrive, my honey, to conciliate matters a little," said Mrs. O'Dowd. "I will venture to take the liberty of speaking to Lady Derville, upon the subject of this injudicious harshness; when the worst that can betide me is to be turned out upon the wide world by the decree of *Snarlboots*, for my daring presumption; and then, by a retreat in my house, your perils I trust would vanish:—unless you were bewitched by my dazzling charms into the peril of a prosecution from Doctors Commons."

Again Mr. Monson blushed, and felt uneasiness; but he took the hand of Mrs. O'Dowd, and thanked her with animation for her meditated kindness.

"But how will you manage to lull the dragon to rest, that you may achieve the exploit of an uninterrupted conference with grandmama?" demanded Lady Meliora.

"Rosa must wile him into the intoxi-

cation of a love *tête à tête*," said Mrs. O'Dowd.

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Charles, now changing to the lily hue; and the uneasy pang of his bosom became more poignant than before.

"Joy, joy, joy! my honies!" Mrs. O'Dowd now exclaimed. "We need not consign poor Rosa to such a penance; for a lucky and brilliant manœuvre has just struck me, that shall lure him out of our way. I'll tell him Lady Wilemore wishes to see him at her *conversazione* this evening, to introduce him to some learned men, who are enchanted by his works."

"Oh! no," said Charles, "you must not degrade yourself by stooping to the aid of untruth to benefit us."

"There is not an iota of invention in my whole device, my honey not even in Sternham's works," returned Mrs. O'Dowd, "except, indeed, of the learned men being enchanted with his writings, and that is only a little harmless embellishment; a *petit morceau* of plumcake to bait our trap; for Lady Wilemore, who

invited us all to attend her *conversazione*, where she expects half the living wonders of the age, and who certainly has some project of her own to be accomplished by courtesy to Mr. Sternham, desired me to say, 'she wished particularly to see him, to present him to some celebrated book-worms, in whom he would find kindred minds and congenial abilities.'

"Now," continued Mrs. O'Dowd, "I will cheerfully give up this *conversazione*, and, what is more genial to my inclination, a quiet tea-drinking at Lady Flowerdew's, ere she attends this night's banquet at Carlton House, to effect an uninterrupted conference with Lady Derville: and, should I succeed in packing off, by the alluring path of vanity, our grim dragon, to the cabinet of curiosity at the Wilemore museum, why then I will recollect your invitation to Mansfield Street, young ladies, and send you off there, to meet Mr. Monson, who will prove your safe escort home; where, I pledge myself, he shall find an affectionate welcome; which, if her ladyship will not give him, I must e'en run off

with him to Paris, on the plausible excuse of seeking my *caro sposo.*"

Charles highly approved of this arrangement, and made his grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. O'Dowd for it; whose sacrifices to obtain this *tête à tête* to serve him, he knew fully how to appreciate.

At length, having obtained repeated views of the allied sovereigns, and all they entered the procession of carriages in Hyde Park to behold — they agreed it would be more politic not to consign Lady Derville longer to the operations of her chaplain's poisons; they therefore returned to Albemarle Street, after dropping Mr. Monson in Piccadilly.

When Rosabella retired with her friend to make their toilet for dinner, and lay it in train for after embellishment, if permission to go to Lady Flowerdew's might make it necessary; she experienced much surprise, on finding Lady Meliora not in the least anxious to join the evening assembly in Mansfield Street: for Rosa knew not she was then under the influence of her determination, to enshrine herself in

the shell of piming constancy for the heroic Montalbert; a resolution not a little aided by the mortification of perceiving the multitude in the park so occupied in gaping after sovereigns and heroes, that they could scarcely spare one glance of admiration for her; whilst, to add to her humiliation, Rosabella again attracted imperial attention, and received the honour of a most graciously distinguishing bow and smile.

Very shortly after they commenced the task of adornment,—Lady Meliora said,—

"Were it not to meet and lure home my brother, nothing should tempt me out to-night.—I wish Mrs. O'Dowd did not think it necessary to have her conference with grandmama *tête à tête*; for then you could go alone, and bring home Charles."

"My dear Meliora, do you find yourself not well," demanded Rosa, in alarmed anxiety, "that you experience this disinclination to mixing with society?"

"My malady is no secret to you, Rosa; and had you given yourself a moment's thought on the subject, or had you ever experienced even a dawning of the passion of love, you would have felt no surprise at society proving not only irksome, but hateful to me, when not enlivened by the presence of him I love."

"But Lord Montalbert was absent yesterday as well as to-day," said Rosabella, with a deeply heaved sigh, called forth by the chord thus unconsciously struck, of her most potent, though hidden grief: "and yet, you evinced no disinclination to society; or to the adulating homage of Lord William Rentlorn and Captain Hawk."

"Ay, child, but then the tender tones of my heart had not been vibrated,—their melting pathos augmented, by tales of valour, not merely never surpassed, but never—never equalled.—Oh! Rosa, Rosa, so enthusiastic is my attachment to this hero become, through all Captain Hawk related this morning, that every thing the world contains has lost all interest for me,

in which Lord Montalbert bears no part; and was it not that society has claims upon me, I could not without unpleasant explanations resist, I should determine never to go out more,—except for exercise, to preserve my looks and health—until the return of the dear lord of my affections."

"But, my dear Meliora," returned Rosabella, "have a care, I implore you, how you yield to this enthusiasm, lest you lay the foundation of future misery for yourself.—Love can be more easily imbibed than conquered; and until Lord Montalbert declares himself your wooer, surely it will be sporting with your own happiness, my beloved friend, to encourage a passion, which causes may conspire to render an inauspicious one."

"But what should—what can conspire, to render it inauspicious?—Does not the man love me to distraction? Have not his eyes,—his marked attention at the jubilee, with his anxiety to obtain admission at Ravenswood, unequivocally declared it? And can any obstacle exist on either

side,—since our birth and fortune so happily coalesce?"

"I know not what can, or may conspire," said Rosa, with a sigh from the centre of her heart, "but many an individual, whose union has been further advanced in progress, than yours with Lord Montalbert, has found impeding circumstances arise to destroy his hopes, and perchance his happiness."

"For Heaven's sake, do not talk thus terrifically, as if in the spirit of prophecy;" exclaimed Lady Meliora, in a tone proclaiming she was not pleased; "since I feel conviction, nothing can, will, or shall arise, to destroy my firm hopes of a union with the heroic Montalbert.—And I am sure, it is the most inconsistent thing upon earth, for you to preach against my nurture of this attachment, when you first awakened my enthusiasm by the accounts of his lordship's benevolence, which you used to come in full fraught with from the cabineers around Ravenswood."

Rosa attempted no further advice upon the subject, since she plainly developed,

in the present tone of Lady Meliora's mind, it must prove useless; however, she began to entertain some very sanguine expectations of her ladyship's newly augmented enthusiasm not leading her quite so far into her retreat from society, as her wishes seemed to point at, on perceiving she contemplated her own lovely form in the glass, full as long, and as complacently as usual.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE dinner party of this day was composed only of Lady Derville, her chaplain, granddaughter, *protégée*, and Mrs. O'Dowd, who, the moment the repast terminated, and the domestics had taken their departure, suddenly exclaimed—

"Ah, my! what a treacherous memory has fallen to my lot! There have I but narrowly escaped the negligence of forgetting the delivery of a lady's message to you, Mr. Sternham.—Lady Wilemore, with whom by the way, you seem a wonderful favourite."

"Do you then deem it a wonder, madam, my being in the favour of a lady?" demanded Mr. Sternham, making so strenuous an effort to unbend from his austerity, that it elicited to his countenance so much distortion of grimace, the gravity of Lady Meliora's love-sick melancholy was instantaneously subdued by it.

"Assuredly no, Sir," replied Mrs. O'Dowd, whose difficult policy it was, to labour at improving his temper: "it is only an error in language, which inadvertence and usage have led me into; and was I to say an amazing favourite, the term might prove as objectionable. But shall I say in plain straight-forward fact, that you stand upon a high pinnacle of preeminence in her ladyship's favour? And so, in attestation of this distinction, she charged me with the embassy of requesting you to favour her with your company at her *conversazione* this evening."

"Her ladyship must excuse me," replied Mr. Sternham, achieving a smile, as he sent his eyes to perform a love glance at Rosa. "She cannot expect me to yield that conversation my heart feeds upon, for any other."

"She will be grievously disappointed; as some of the first geniuses of the age will be with her, to whom she particularly wishes to introduce you."

"She would confer honour on me: but I prefer happiness."

"Oh, the poor literati!—What will be done to console them? For it seems, it is some book that has set them frantic about an introduction to you."

"A book! Eh, how! A book! Did you say a book, madam? A Review was it?"

"No, no, some book of your writing, I believe. But, Lady Meliora, my honey! do you think the kind of ruff Lady Townhurst wore, likely to become me? As to you, Rosa, I do not think that phenomenon — a *rich* poet—permitted you to attend to any thing but himself."

"But, Mrs. O'Dowd," stammered out Mr. Sternham, "pray, will—will you, have the goodness, to—to recollect what book?"

"It was a volume of his own poems, Sir, with beautiful drawings, by Westall."

"Tut! tut! no madam.—The book the learned gentlemen admi—saw of mine?"

"Ah, now! how could you be expecting me to remember the name of a cramp title of an unintelligible work—one of your learned puzzles?"

"It must have been my last publication, since that was *longè mihi perfectissimum opus.*"

"O, the very one!—There was opium in it, and the fumes have mounted into the poor men's heads, and set them mad about you."

"Madam, madam," exclaimed Mr. Sternham, fermenting into himself, "cannot you condescend to the rationality of speaking directly to plain questions?—What can cause these *very* learned men to become so extraordinarily anxious to behold the author of my work?"

"Ah! now, my good Sir, through what inspiration can I answer that question?"

"Well, I really should like prodigiously to be resolved in this. Any thing, but my happiness for the evening, I would give to have this explained."

"Only just give me one of the kind looks, I behold you lavishing on others, and I'll guess for you.—They want to improve themselves, by conversing with the author of so very clever a work."

"Did—did Lady Wilemore say that, madam?" Mr. Sternham exclaimed, with a degree of vehement eagerness, that nearly overset the arch gravity of Mrs. O'Dowd.

"Now do not be expecting me to tell you all Lady Wilemore repeated, of what those book-worms said of you, to be making you as vain as fifty coxcombs, gulping at the fount of Flattery. But, I will tell you, I was so sure one learned worm would be so wild to get introduced to another, to nibble up more knowledge, that, without ever dreaming it was necessary to ask you a word upon the subject, I, like what I am—a wild Irish helter skelter—ordered my carriage to be here at half past nine, to bring you there."

"I am most exceedingly indebted to you, Mrs. O'Dowd, for such very polite attention: and a—could—a—I—a—;" and now Mr. Sternham vainly wished, that he had not so rashly pronounced his negative to Lady Wilemore's invitation; as he found his love and vanity at perfect warfare.

For some moments he continued silent, in mental conflict; and at length, as vanity was drawing towards the victory, he ventured to say,—

"It was prodigiously unlucky, your ordering your carriage for no purpose, Mrs. O'Dowd."

"It answered the purpose of evincing my wish to oblige you, sir, and those gentlemen of superlative learning; whom, although I have not the honour of knowing, I must nevertheless venerate."

"Dear madam, you are truly polite; and possess a very proper way of thinking, relative to learning. But, pray,—a—may I ask, are they indeed men of *superlative* learning?"

"As such Lady Wilemore represented them."

"And, they did my last work the honour of admiring it?"

"So, no doubt, did all, who could understand it, sir."

"You are really prodigiously polite, madam.—But this has been rather an—an unlucky invitation, that awakens a warfare

between inclination and interest.—For this opportunity of cultivating the good opinion of these men of judgment, for the advancement of my forthcoming publication——"

"Ought not, certainly, to be neglected, my very worthy friend," said Lady Derville; "for literary fame is of such advantage to a man, it often stands his friend where least he expects it.—By all means go to Lady Wilemore's *conversazione*."

Punctual to orders, the carriage of Mrs. O'Dowd was announced; when Mr. Sternham made his retiring bend, and set off for Fitzroy Square, revelling in the ecstatic fancy of his new work,—from the patronage of these discerning men of superlative literary fame,—dashing through as many editions, at least, as the London Directory, which he had noted with an envious eye, as it lay on Mrs. O'Dowd's writing table, the preceding day.

The moment Mr. Sternham departed, Mrs. O'Dowd devised an excuse for sending the young friends out of the room, and then said—

" Now we have so unexpectedly got rid of one impediment to a wish of mine, will you, my honey, send these two girls off to take their tea at Lord Flowerdew's; as I do pant for an uninterrupted conference with your ladyship, upon important business?"

" Dear Mrs. O'Dowd, how in possibility could I send them to an assembly, without a *chaperon?*"

" It is no assembly, my honey; Lord Flowerdew never permits any thing of the kind in his house on Sundays; and Lady Flowerdew, who is one of the most amiable and correct of women, will be their *chaperon,* whilst beneath her roof; and I'll engage, Terry will protect them from every ill, whilst attending them there, and home again."

" Well, Mrs. O'Dowd, to oblige you, they may go," said Lady Derville, in a tone indicative of reluctance, inspired by apprehension of this *tête à tête* being promoted to break to her the mutual attachment of Charles and Rosabella.

The moment this evidently reluctant

acquiescence was drawn from Lady Derville, Mrs. O'Dowd issued orders for her ladyship's carriage, to be immediately got in readiness, and then gave information to her confederates, that the hoped for permission had been granted.

When the lovely young friends arrived in Mansfield Street, they found with Lady Flowerdew, beside the Miss Lorrains, Lords Bayswater and William Rentlorn, and Captain Hawk, all anxiously expecting them; for Lady Flowerdew had hesitated whether yet to inform Lord Bayswater of the suspicion, which hung on Miss Frederick's birth, and therefore he felt no impeding barrier to his wish for seeing her; whilst Lord William had been fully informed upon the extent of Lady Meliora Monson's fortune, but not having found time since that important intelligence had been conveyed to him, exactly to calculate upon whether that portion would suffice for his exigencies, with those sacrifices he believed he could unreluctantly make, to obtain a beautiful and young appendage to the money he required,

thought it better policy to continue in the course he had commenced, than give in ere the odds compelled it; whilst Captain Hawk would not yield any opportunity of proceeding in the covert speculation he had planned.

Lord Flowerdew was at a *diplomatic* dinner, and our young friends were disappointed of their expected introduction to him: so that as this, from his lordship's absence,—who usually drew a large assemblage of men of letters, and professional fame into his domestic circle, when he formed one of it,—was a very circumscribed party, the conversation became chiefly general; in which Lady Flowerdew, with winning address, lured the timid Rosabella to mingle her stores, and to prove that her mental charms could enchant equally with her face, form, and manner; whilst Lady Meliora, quite forgetful of the sarcophagus of constancy, she had purposed to entomb herself in for Lord Montalbert's sake, was all animated gaiety, and in merciless barbarity playing off, without compunction, the de-

structive artillery of her potent attractions.

The portfolio of Miss Lorrain formed part of the evening's amusement; and the evident pleasure the inspection of it seemed to yield our heroine, led Lady Flowerdew to the inquiry, "if she could draw?"

"She could sketch a little," she said.

Lady Meliora, flattered out of every apprehension of *rivalité*, by the devoted adulation of Lord William and Captain Hawk, and the incense her sallies of vivacity and mingled *naïveté* had received, through the smiles of Lady Flowerdew, and the handsome young poet, in the natural affection of her heart for Rosa, exclaimed,—

"Sketch a little! why, Lady Flowerdew, she sketches beautifully."

"Since that is the case, Miss Frederick," said Lady Flowerdew, approaching her, with a papered up parcel, "you may find some advantage, as well as pleasure, in accepting this offering, I have been commissioned to try my influence with you, to receive: since the plates are beau-

tifully designed, and executed by our first artists; and the poems worthy of the plates. This offering is, my dear, from the grateful poet, whom you so highly flattered, by your admiration of a volume of his, this morning."

Although Rosabella's expectation of admiration had been taught to find a basis, she yet had as little idea of Lord Bayswater being her admirer, as she first had conceived of Egremont being her serious wooer; yet she blushed, and trembled, and hesitated, as she delivered her thanks, as if conscious that he was so; her emotions of surprise, gratification, joy, and gratitude were so much awakened by a gift, which a few lines of the poetry, with the exquisite beauty of some of the designs she had seen, taught her to appreciate as a most valuable one; whilst the doubt which darted through her mind, upon the propriety of accepting a present from a stranger, was quickly put to flight, by the spontaneous suggestion, that no one ought to act so ungraciously, as to decline the acceptance of a work presented by its author,

particularly when such a woman as Lady Flowerdew was the embassadress.

Those who composed this small circle were so equal to the spirit of animated conversation, that all with amazement heard the carriage of Lady Flowerdew announced, to convey her to Pall Mall; a sensation of amazement that was augmented with many uneasy alarms mingled with it, in the minds of Lady Meliora and Rosabella, on finding it could be so late, and no Charles yet arrived.

"Lady Meliora and Miss Frederick," Lady Flowerdew said, with one of her enchanting smiles, "I must implore your excuses for leaving you; but I must obey the commands of royalty, and keep to my appointed hour:—and you, my lords and gentlemen, I must implore your forgiveness for my necessary rudeness in turning you out of my house; as I cannot for humanity sake leave you here, to the too probable peril of having your unsuspecting hearts lured from you, and I not by to protect you from all danger. As to you, Pindarus, you are bound to the same port

of honour, and may as well accompany me. William, if you and Captain Hawk are bound towards the point I am making for, I can set you down on my way; if not, you can take the carriage on to your place of destination."

"I really do not think I will be tooled in the same vehicle, with such a prude as you are," cried Lord William. "It is confounded fastidiousness in you, my lady aunt, to fight so shy of allowing me ever to remain one moment on the ground, to flirt with the Lorrains, or any other neat goer you may have in your stud of attraction, unless you are present. Faith, I'll get the whip hand of you some of these days, and give you the go-by; although you may honour me with a facer for it."

"Well, well," rejoined her ladyship, smiling, "we generally contrive to have some *beautiful sparring*, and that is the reason we are such fast friends;"—and now, bidding those she parted from, adieu, she gave her hand to the reluctantly departing Lord Bayswater, who but narrowly escaped committing mental treason;

and followed by the other two half angry gentlemen, her ladyship set off for the scene of splendor she was bidden to; and scarcely had this departure taken place, when Miss Lorrain, delivering a small packet to Rosabella, said:

"Lady Flowerdew desired me to present you with this, Miss Frederick; and to say, 'she would have performed her embassy herself, only, lest you might have any objection to accepting these tickets for the ball at White's—it might not have been pleasant to have discussed the matter before Lord Bayswater, who commissioned her to offer them to you and your fair friend, whom Lady Flowerdew bid me add, she will be most happy to *chaperon*.

Rosabella changed colour, through excessive astonishment, at Lord Bayswater making her such expensive offerings; and not without a sensation of regret, her reason promptly told her this offering must not be accepted; since such scenes were incompatible with her benefactress's plans

for her; and instantly with every proper grateful acknowledgment for the honour Lord Bayswater had done her, declined the ticket for herself; but added, "she doubted not Lady Meliora's being happy in availing herself of his lordship's kind and polite attention; and Lady Derville to intrust her grandaughter to the protection of Lady Flowerdew."

Rosabella answered for her friend, because she had heard her deplore her having no chance of being either at the ball at the Duke of ——, or at Burlington House; from her not being acquainted with the young peer, who was to give one; and through the difficulty of procuring tickets for the other—without once calculating upon the possibility of that friend's taking umbrage at Lord Bayswater not having offered his tickets decidedly to her, instead of Rosa.

Yet, so it was; this young woman's vanity had been nurtured and encouraged, through having been reared without competitor to curb and correct it, until it had

arisen to a height, which led it up to absolute malady, that was stealing pure health from all the bright excellence of her mind; and subverting all that was sweet, affectionate, and amiable in her heart, by the subtile venom of jealousy, and almost of envy.

And now this decided homage to Rosabella, who had sprung at once into a superlative beauty, as if the air of England had magically effected it; and into a potent rival to her powerful charms of such a fearful mould, that an earl, young, transcendently handsome, a favourite of the Muses, the idol of all the belles of fashion, whose boasted resistance against the spells of love she had determined herself to vanquish, had in two formidable instances evinced his preference to this Rosa; and this proving more of mortification than she could brook, she instantly determined to stay from the *fête*, or every *fête* for ever, rather than condescend to appear as the attendant star of a brighter luminary,—the appendage of a more admired rival; and to the astonishment and cha-

grin of the unconscious Rosa, she declined accepting the ticket of Lord Bayswater.

"His lordship will be highly mortified at this rejection of his tickets," said Miss Lorrain; "since he had flattered himself he should have had the triumph of drawing to White's the two most brilliant stars of the constellation of beauty that would assemble there; and even to this mortification, I fancy, there will be added a still more *heartfelt* regret, by your disappointing all his hopes through that evening, Miss Frederick."

To Rosabella's nicely discriminating ear there sounded, whilst Miss Lorrain performed her embassy relative to the tickets, a sad and tremulous tone in her voice, that seemed to speak some kind of disappointment; and, conceiving it arose from not being of the happy number selected for this ball, as she deeply blushed at the compliments thus paid to her by the elegant Claudia, at the terminating allusion of her speech, she inquired in a tone of that interest Miss Lorrain had power-

fully awakened, if she was to go to White's.

"Lady Flowerdew is so very, very kind to take my sister; and would me also," replied Miss Lorrain, not successful in her aim to suppress a heavy sigh, "did not both my health and spirits negative so very gay a thing for me."

At this moment the carriage of Lady Derville was announced, when Lady Meliora, having lost all recollection of her brother in the operations of her wounded vanity, instantly arose to depart.

"But Mr. Monson,—Meliora!—Will you not wait for him?" asked Rosabella, all anxiety, lest, should the efforts of Mrs. O'Dowd prove successful, in bending Lady Derville to conciliatory measures, they should become useless by their perhaps too precipitate return.

And this anxiety was observed minutely by Mary Lorrain; and ascribed—with joy ascribed by her to tender interest for the handsome Mr. Monson, urging her wish to remain for his escort home; since she had made observations on her beloved sister,

which had led her to fear the unequivocal admiration of Lord Bayswater for Miss Frederick would but too fatally augment her poor Claudia's suspicious melancholy; and that the heart of the too lovely Rosabella might be found in the possession of Mr. Monson, had in consequence become her natural and ardent wish.

"I will remain one quarter of an hour longer," said Lady Meliora, making an effort at the resumption of her serenity; "although I begin to feel a dawning suspicion, that my brother has mistaken where we meant to accept the invitation for this evening, and is gone to Lady Wilemore's."

The quarter of an hour acceded to by Lady Meliora, lagged its heavy flight on the leaden wings of disappointed expectation; and no Charles appearing, his sister again repeating her belief now firmly fixed, of his having fallen into the dangerous vortex of the Standard of Perfection, bade the Miss Lorrains adieu, and with our painfully alarmed heroine departed; when, the moment the coach commenced its con-

veyance of them from Lord Flowerdew's door, Terry was hailed by Charles, who in a moment more was seated in the carriage.

CHAPTER IX.

"I was afraid you were gone," said Mr. Monson, in a voice indicative of embarrassment, the moment after he was seated. "How lucky I have been to catch you flying."

"Have you been at Lady Wilemore's?" demanded Lady Meliora.

"Heavens! no, child."

"Then, what detained you?"

"Business."

"Business on Sunday!—Oh, Charles, Charles! this cannot—must not be. Beware what you are about, I charge you!" exclaimed Lady Meliora, in a tone of such reproach, that the alarmed Rosabella dreading its effect, as she saw Mr. Monson endeavouring to let the glass down, as if to make his escape,—through an unconquerable impulse, catching the hand of her fair friend, in much emotion, said:

"Oh! Meliora! do you beware."

"And do you beware, Miss Frederick," retorted her ladyship, haughtily. "I am not to be governed by you, as Lady Derville is by your intended spouse. I suppose, because *poets* present incense at your shrine, and that to you all offerings are made, you are absolutely beginning to fancy yourself of consequence, and so may take unwarrantable liberties."

"Merciful Heaven! what do I hear?" exclaimed Mr. Monson, hastily drawing up the window which he had succeeded in letting down. "Can it be my sister! Meliora Monson! a being I thought possessed of every excellence of heart, who thus has spoken to her earliest friend, —the gentle, the angelic Rosabella? Oh! Rosa, can you tell me what this means?"

"Indeed, I know not," Rosa said, bursting into tears of cruelly wounded affection; "but, that the world is sadly changed to me."

"Oh, by all means, cry on, since that is the measure Lady Derville would, of all others, approve; awakening pity and commiseration, as a barbarously treated celes-

tial," retorted Lady Meliora, now sobbing almost convulsively with deforming passion: "And you, Mr. Monson, ay, do clasp her hand; and why—why not clasp her to your sympathizing bosom, in *this* your opportune display of commiseration? —assumed to turn off my just reproaches for conduct in you, sir, that has irritated me out of myself, in alarm, sir, not only for your personal safety, but for—for your future welfare, not only here, but hereafter, sir."

"Had not your ladyship better, by some little salutary corrections, prepare for your own future welfare?" Charles angrily replied. "Will not the diabolical passions of anger, envy, and inordinate pride, most intemperately displayed to a being superior to you in all things, but in what the caprice of fortune has bereaved her of, prove something of impediment to your way?"

"Oh, for mercy!" exclaimed the weeping Rosa, raising her hands in an agony of supplication; "allow nothing so dreadful as this is to disturb that sweet affec-

tionate attachment and harmony, which, for so many years of my life, I have been a delighted witness of.—Oh! Meliora, too well I know your heart, to believe, for one instant, the unkindness, you have suffered to escape you, sprung from thence; turn then to that as your guide,—let the gentle, the kind, the tender feelings of that again find influence; and, in one succeeding moment, I shall have the gratification of beholding you on the bosom of your affectionate brother, imploring him to pity all that sprung from a momentary impulse of a foreign innovator."

The tears of Lady Meliora, now, with a convulsive struggle, rushed from the rugged channel of ungenial passions into that of penitence; and not on the bosom of her brother, but into the promptly expanding arms of Rosabella, she flung herself, imploring forgiveness for unkindness and arrogance the most unjustifiable:—when, shortly, Charles, subdued by the affecting scene, encircled them both with a fraternal embrace.

"But," at length, the kindly forgiving

Rosabella said, we must dry our tears and compose our aspect, my dear Meliora, without delay; for, should Lady Derville observe the trace of them, and inquire the cause, we cannot tell her we have stepped back to our childhood, and had a renewal of our nursery *brouilleries*."

"Ah! Rosa," said Lady Meliora, now endeavouring to suppress her sobs, "you speak not with your usual accuracy, when you say '*our brouilleries*,' for you now, as in what I must call *my* nursery broils, only sustained the part of forbearance and tender forgiving kindness. Oh! Charles, do you, for I cannot ever recollect Rosa the aggressor in any of our disagreements?"

"No," replied Charles, with evident emotion; "I only can remember her as now—the olive branch—the meek-eyed dove of gentleness and peace."

They now reached Albemarle Street, and although, through Mr. Monson's unfortunately protracting their return, Mr. Sternham had arrived before them, to operate by his noxious presence, upon the

maternal tenderness of Lady Derville's bosom, she yet, in defiance of his scowling interdict of brow, extended her hand to Charles on his appearing, and tremulously articulated—

"My dear boy is welcome."

Charles took her hand with affection's tender grasp, then pressed it with reverence to his lips, but without speaking,—and then turning to Mrs. O'Dowd, he beamed a smile expressive of his gratitude.

Terry, now bringing in Rosabella's parcel of books from the carriage, Lady Meliora, in sincere contrition for the direful envy she had permitted to find influence in her bosom relative to those very books, wishing herself to be the proclaimer of all Lord Bayswater's attentions to her amiable friend, instantly took the parcel into her own hand, and said—

"This, grandmama, is a beautiful and valuable present just made to Rosa by Lord Bayswater, through the delicate agency of Lady Flowerdew.—All his Lordship's published poetic works, embel-

lished by exquisitely finished plates, by one of the most celebrated artists."

"But who can vouch for their subjects being such as befit unsophisticated innocence to peruse?" exclaimed Mr. Sternham, darting to the parcel, and seizing it for his prey, in the phrensy of his jealous alarm.—"I must take upon me, Lady Meliora, to examine the purport of this rhyming trash, ere I permit any lady of this party to explore one page."

"There can exist no occasion Mr. Sternham, for your preparatory inspection," said Lady Derville, "as Lady Flowerdew was agent in the business."

Mr. Sternham, instantly relinquishing his grasp of the books, made a stately bow to his patroness, and retired in high displeasure, not only with her ladyship, but with the whole world; since that day had not proved a very auspicious one to any of his hopes or wishes; for even when, in the altitude of flattered vanity, he proceeded to Lady Wilemore's in full expectation of that incense Mrs. O'Dowd had decoyed him thither through the certainty

of, he only met the mortification of a grievous disappointment; for, although her ladyship, anxious to obtain his favour, to secure to herself and niece a firm station in Lady Derville's approbation, had treated him with the most flattering distinction, and had introduced him to celebrated men of genius, as their kindred soul; not one of them mentioned his works, or ever even alluded to that particular publication, Mrs. O'Dowd had mentioned as having fascinated them.

The moment Mr. Sternham disappeared, Charles, as little relishing Lord Bayswater's gift as even his preceptor himself, eagerly requested Rosabella's permission to inspect her present.

"For, I own," he added, "I have much curiosity to learn how beautiful drawings could be adapted to satiric poems."

"Lord Bayswater is an epic and pastoral poet, as well as a satiric one," replied the blushing Rosa.

"I must beg leave to postpone this

poetic inspection," said Lord Derville, "as I want to monopolize your attention, for the purpose of enlisting as many of you as are able and willing to man my boat, which I am to launch for Woolwich to-morrow morning."

"Ah, my!" said Mrs. O'Dowd, "how very provoking, that, however willing we ladies may be, we must not be able, as it will not be style; since only the nursery fashionables will be seen on this expedition to Woolwich, as none who have been presented at court can find it necessary to go out of their circle to behold these northern lights."

"But, my dear madam, this party cannot make transit through the scenes of court presentation," replied Lord Derville, "since the Thames flows not into her Majesty's drawing-room: and, as Miss Vandelure does me the honour of forming one of my party, I make it a point with my sisters, Rosa and Meliora, to come and aid me in the ceremonials of the day. You, Mrs. O'Dowd, I can only request to

favour me with your company; whilst, as to grandam, I fear, I must not hope for her presiding patronage."

"I wish you had not formed this perilous party, my dear child," said Lady Derville. "A crowded scene, like that which will be exhibited to-morrow on the Thames, cannot fail of being one of danger, and consequent alarm to all who are interested for the adventurous who embark in it."

"But, my dear sensitive plant, I have procured a capital boat; and, thanks to Mr. Foxcraft, d——ish reasonable, considering all things, and our gondoliers superexcellent."

"Why, then," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "I, for my part, will be most happy in the honour of accepting your lordship's invitation.—But what will we wear?—Did Miss Vandelure mention any particular costume for the occasion?"

"How did the universally celebrated Mr. Puff dress Thames and his tributaries?" demanded Mr. Monson. "Cannot you adopt his costume?"

"Ah! don't, my honey dear, be quizzing

me; for really it will be monstrously disagreeable not to be in the costume of those in the secrets of *haut-ton;* and I have not time for a note to Mrs. Dizenall, which is mighty provoking."

"Well, now we are all agreed to enlist under the same flag to-morrow," said Lord Derville—"Rosa, that's a dear, will you promise to make our breakfast in time to-morrow; and I'll promise to introduce you to as beautiful a girl as you have ever seen reflected in your own glass?"

"Thet is not as eesy e tesk as ever your lerdship done," exclaimed Mr. Foxcraft, anxious to make his progress in the favour of all the family.

"I will promise," said Rosabella, inattentive to the complimentary part of his lerdship's request, and awake only to the apprehension of being drawn by compliance in to a *tête à tête* with Mr. Sternham or Charles,—"if you will promise not to be lazy, but to be here in readiness to receive me."

"Why, you forward gipsy! this is an absolute assignation!" exclaimed his lord-

ship, laughing.—"What, I suppose you want to declare your passion; but you are late, my dear,—my heart is disposed of."

"Had you been judicious," Rosa replied, "you would not have thus cruelly blighted my aspiring hopes; since now, by effectually destroying my *bon repos*, you may disable me for the early task you wish me to perform.—However, be faithful to our assignation, and I will endeavour to delude my dreams, with the soothing hope of what may be effected for me through pity's inspirations."

"Ah, well," returned his lordship, smiling, "according to the vulgar adage, Rosa,—'Every dog has his day.'—I once made desperate love to you, and you repulsed me; and now, there is a fair retaliation *in petto* for you."

"Made desperate love to Rosa?" exclaimed Lady Derville, turning pale with terror, although well aware all danger was now past.—"When, where, may I ask, pray?"

"At Myrtle's Town, whither I went so

up to the eyes in love, as to be fully intent upon offering my coronet to this fair enslaver:—but, whew! ere I could arrive at the climax of my declaration, this would-not-be countess flew off into such heroics about her duty to a certain personage, and Heaven knows what, of sentimen*talities*, that the result was, she all but cuffed me out of her house; nor would this damsel, so renowned for charity and suavity, afford me one *petit morceau* of food, although I acknowledged to her that I was starving."

Lady Derville blushed to as deep a tint as Rosabella and Charles did; and tears started to her eyes in penitence, for allowing, what she now began to conceive must be the inspirations of jealousy's apprehensions, to lead her into a belief that Rosabella could be subtly, treacherously, and ungratefully mining for the captivation of Charles; since here was at once conviction, that, could she act so base a part, the coronet would have been accepted.

"But, my deer lerd," exclaimed Mr. Foxcraft, "beweer how you let one word

of this treenspire before Miss Vendelure; bekease it might occasion her uneesiness at some future peeriod."

"Indeed," said Rosabella, "my vanity must undergo the mortification of a descent from this high pinnacle, where Lord Derville has placed it, since I recollect nothing of this decisive nature amounting to declaration. Was there not something relative to the hollow sounding instrument upon which prudence beat love's retreat, that forbade this elevating triumph for me, Lord Derville?"

"Your empty coffers, child?—Oh! yes.—I told you they made a d—l of a clatter against you:—but my head was so empty of mundane knowledge, that, had you managed me, instead of turning me out of doors, I would have flown with you from the aforesaid Myrtle's Town to the land of uncontrolled marriage.—So, rely upon it, child, it was all your own romantic sentiment*alities*, that alone prevented your being now my *cara sposa*."

Rosabella, whilst blushing at an attesta-

tion, which she could recall to memory no proof of being a serious one, stole a scrutinizing glance at his lordship, to discover if, in possibility, he could be tipsy, or what could cause his assertion. But nothing in the young peer's countenance could she perceive, to account for his affirming he ever had entertained one serious thought of her; since *there* was not to be read, that he was making this assertion to be conveyed by his friend Foxcraft to Miss Vandelure, to render the disinterestedness of his nature manifest to her: for this lady, when his lordship had been breathing his love strains into her attentive ears that morning, had intimated some apprehension of not being regarded for herself alone; and now, could she be taught to believe he had ever addressed the portionless *protégée* of his grandmother, every doubt of the truth of his passion must be removed.

But, whatever effect this intelligence might have upon Miss Vandelure, it operated on the heart of Lady Derville most

favourably for Rosabella; and obtained for her, when they separated for the night, a much more affectionate adieu, than, since their arrival in London, she had been accustomed to receive.

CHAPTER X.

The morning arose auspicious to the projects of the day; and Rosabella, faithful to her promise, was early in the breakfast room, where she found only Mr. Monson waiting for her; who, the moment she appeared, took her hand with affection's ardent pressure; and, ere she could effect her purpose of promptly withdrawing it from his grasp, he suddenly dropped it, retired to a window, and then again approached her, with an air betraying indecision.

"Rosa, I greatly wish to consult you upon many subjects of importance to me; because I know so well the excellence of your head and heart, and that there is in existence no other being, whose counsel I would implicitly subscribe to:—but, I am allowed no opportunity for serious lengthened conference with you.—I have—I

wish ——;" suddenly he ceased, walked again to the window, and, after a moment's pause there, returned to her, and said—

"Ere that demoniac persecutor of yours and mine comes on the pinions of his diabolical jealousy, to interrupt our *tête à tête*, dear Rosa, I must tell you—but come to the window, and whilst we seem attending to the street passengers, I can tell you that—that it is not—not, in my power to attend you to Woolwich this morning."

"Not accompany us to Woolwich!" repeated Rosa, in a tone of concern mingled with surprise, which the remembrance of the companion she had seen with him in the hackney-coach awakened.

"No," he replied, "I unluckily—unfortunately, made an engagement for to-day,—which nothing should have tempted me to do, had I known of this marine expedition yesterday. But now, instead of being near the haven of all my fondly growing wishes during this whole day—I shall be overwhelmed with—

"Oh! here comes Lord Derville's *Phor-*

mio—broach nothing of what I have just told you; for I shall let them all imagine I am to form one of the party, until the moment of your embarkation."

The breakfast party now began rapidly to assemble, when Lady Meliora anxiously inquired from Lord Derville, "if Miss Vandelure was to come alone from Bryanstone Square?"

"Two young friends, both heiresses, were to accompany her," he said.

"And what attendant squires do they bring in their train?" still more anxiously her ladyship demanded.

"Not any; surely we have sufficient in our own party to attend on them."

"And who it to attend on Rosa and me, pray?"

"Why, Mr. Sternham, child, if perchance grandam deems it necessary to send him on the watch to prevent our tumbling into the water."

"I really think, Mortimer," said Lady Derville, anxiously, "you are so very scantily provided with attendant squires, as your sister calls them; and as the dan-

gers of a bustling water scene like this require them for aid, in case of peril from inexperienced or inebriated boatmen, or any form in which accident may assail you; I think you can neither relinquish the attendance of Mr. Sternham, nor of any one, whom you can enlist or impress into the service. There is that Captain Hawk, who lodges in this hotel, and who therefore can easily be applied to; and although I cannot like him, I yet should be much more comfortable, were he to be added to your muster roll."

As such was the plea of Lady Derville, for wishing her chaplain to form one of this aquatic expedition, not one of those, even to whom his presence would prove most annoying, could frown a negative upon the subject; and Lord Derville dispatched his alert ambassador, Mr. Foxcraft, with an invitation to the gallant captain, which was most joyfully accepted.

Miss Vandelure and her two fair friends at length arrived; and when our heroine was introduced to this much talked of

heiress, and heard her speak, and beheld the grace of her movements and the elegance of her manners, she wondered not Lord Derville was enamoured; her only wonder was, that she had been left for him to win.

All now being reported in readiness, our party set out, attended by the prayers of the trembling Lady Derville for their safety; who, shortly after their departure, herself set out to spend the day with her friend Lady Elstow at Richmond.

Our party embarked at Westminster Bridge, and were only just in time; for as they drew near to Whitehall Stairs, where all the gay and beautiful barges were assembled for the royal navigators, the signal was fired to announce, that the allied sovereigns, with the Prince Regent, were going on board. They were then sufficiently near to distinguish all they were anxious to behold; to hear the national anthem struck up by the various bands in attendance; then to join the fleet as

it glided down the river, and to unite in, and be almost stunned by the enthusiastic acclamations of thousands.

So great was the bustle in their hurried embarkation, and so attractive the ensuing scene, that, not until after the loud cheers from the spectators upon London Bridge, when the Lord Mayor's and corporation barges joined the royal fleet, had begun to lessen on the ear — although the chorus of acclamations echoed from the thronged wharfs and shipping on all sides—Lady Meliora perceived her younger brother was absent; when in alarm she demanded what had become of him?

"I saw him place you in the boat, Rosa; and then I lost him. Surely no accident has befallen him."

"The gentlemen it seems had a prior engagement, which he preferred," replied Lord Derville, in a tone of pique.

"I believe he tuck offence at thee espect of our berge," said Mr. Foxcraft; "he ebsolutely libelled it, as the dust-cart of thee meetropolis; and wished thee

leedies out of such a deegreeding conveeyence; but as I toult him, he must speer us in condemnetion, as thee circumscription of time for erreengement left us no elteerneetive."

"*Axing* your honour's pardon," said Terry—whom Lady Derville had sent to watch over the safety of her treasures; "but a man in a red coat, and wid a badge upon his arm, up yander beyant where we tuck shipping, said, yez might have had his elegant boat, wid yawnings, and all so gay and pleasant, and safe and sound into the bargain, for a trifle more; and he hoped that before the day would be out, yez would not be finding cause to repint falling out wid him for the differ."

"Heaven preserve us!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, turning pale with apprehension; "surely, I trust this boat is safe and sound?"

"Perfectly, mee dear medem," said Mr. Foxcraft. "I'll be *guerentee* for thet; and rest essured it was only poor spite meed thee ebomineeble extortioner lie

in his *troath*,* whom mee lord and I would not let impose upon us. The difference in thee deemend was of course no object to my lerd; but it wes upan principle we ected, not to encourage extortion; and vengeence hes made him done this, to terrify our leedies."

"I must own I wish your principles had not been so much on the alert upon this occasion," said Miss Vandelure; "for since you have been speaking of our barge, I have observed several of the Thames watermen looking earnestly at it, in rather an alarming manner."

"*Thet* is merely impertinence, Miss Vendeelure, bekease this is not belonging to their fleet, but privete property, which it is their policy to discourage thee hire of."

"Pray, good man," demanded Lady Meliora, in a tremulous tone addressing the helmsman, "is this boat safe?"

"It waunt weather a gale; but it wull last our time. Why, bless you, we had

* Throat.

all the lakes staunched last night, in no time, so soon as ever the gemmin engaged it."

"Oh! my honey, dear, Lord Derville!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd; "do not let us, I implore you, return by water."

"D—n my eyes, Jeck!" exclaimed a sailor, now rowing a man of war's gig along side our barge; "but I'll lay you a quid, or a glass of grog, the sharks are in chase of that there crazy hulk."

"Heaven preserve us!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, now assailed by an ague fit; "that sea prophet predicts a drowning for us; and that the sharks, through the same instinct that guides them after mortal maladies at sea, is leading them in chase of us, to feed on our comely corpses."

"If we may judge destinies by countenances," said Mr. Sternham, meaning to acquit himself this day as an agreeable man of letters, who could unbend at will, and condescend to playfulness, "I should predict defiance to the sharks, and prophesy perfect safety with our present helmsman."

Notwithstanding the sensation of alarm that had been generally excited, the whole party were inclining to risibility they could scarcely suppress, at the ludicrous manner in which the countenance of Mr. Sternham portrayed the innovation of vivacity; when, without one moment's previous notice, their old decayed, and hastily repaired boat, swamped; and scarcely allowing time to those whom it contained, to utter their piercing cries for aid, sunk to the bottom.

It was fortunate for our imperilled party, that the Thames was at this moment almost literally covered with boats, so that instantaneous aid surrounded them; nor was humanity slow or sparing in its exertions to succour them in every way that assistance could prove effectual; men even unhesitatingly plunging into the river, to rescue their fellow beings from a watery grave.

Almost in the very instant the sailor had pronounced his supposition of the chase of the sharks, Rosabella had observed Wilson, the attached servant of Captain

Arundel, in this very boat; and fortunately their recognition was mutual; for Wilson started from his seat, and sprung to that spot in the gig nearest to her, to venture an humble entreaty to be favoured with her address for his dear master, who was all anxiety to trace her and her friends out, by which means he was providentially at hand, to snatch her from impending peril, without even wetting a fold of her drapery, into the boat which contained himself.

But, even in this, her moment of prompt rescue from this sudden rush of direful peril on them, Rosabella turned her fearful glance in agonizing gaze for the fate of her friend, her beloved Meliora; when, beholding her sinking from her sight, in defiance of her struggling efforts to obtain her in her grasp, our heroine's faculties took a rapid flight, and she fell deprived of sense upon the shoulder of the humble being who had preserved her.

When the suspended faculties of Rosabella were restored, she found herself extended on a couch, in the small cabin of

a pleasure yatcht; a respectable looking woman, in the class of a domestic, using restoratives for her recovery; the interesting Captain Arundel, with a fine and noble looking man, past the meridian of life, anxiously bending over this couch, awaiting with forcibly portrayed solicitude the reanimation of her faculties; and the moment the unclosing of her eyes, and the retinting of her countenance with the hue of life, proclaimed this anxious wish was accomplished, the anguished grief and horror that had caused her swoon were instantly removed by Captain Arundel at once assuring her—and without waiting for the impeding of his salutary intelligence, by a query of how she found herself?—" that all of the party were, by the instantaneous aid afforded them, providentially saved."

" Oh! not my friend,—my Meliora," she exclaimed, in an agony of grief. " I saw her sink—sink for ever, from my sight."

" You saw her sink," said Arundel, in tones of the most soothing sympathy,

" but she arose again; was caught at by an excellent swimmer belonging to your immersed party, who supported her and himself, until they were both taken up into one of the city barges."

" But, on your honour!" said Rosabella, with the eager wildness of almost fleeting reason; " did you, with your own eyes see this? or whom am I to confide in for its certainty?"

" Wilson beheld it; and so did one of your own domestics, who was rescued with you, by my uncle Admiral Oakbury's men," Arundel replied.

" Terry! Terry!" Rosa cried, starting from the couch, with hands clasped in eloquent entreaty, " oh! let me, let me see him: let me learn from himself, that his terrors did not deceive him; and that it was the rescue of Lady Meliora which he beheld."

" Be composed I implore you, dear Miss Frederick," responded Arundel; " although you cannot at this moment behold this man, whom nothing could induce to remain one moment on board this yacht,

—even to preserve himself from the danger of cold he has run by his complete immersion—after Admiral Oakbury desired his boat's crew to go in quest of positive intelligence of every individual who had shared in this most perilous accident:—but ere he went off on this cruise, he gave us the most positive assurances of the safety of Lord Derville and his sister; assurances that Wilson as positively corroborated."

Rosabella thus comforted by testimony she could not question, of the safety of those two individuals of the party her heart was most interested for; after aspirating in mental devotion an ardent thanksgiving to Heaven for its mercy, she endeavoured to compose her agitation sufficiently, to enable her to speak her grateful acknowledgments to Captain Arundel and his uncle.

Admiral Oakbury—into whose yacht the avarice of Lord Derville had caused the introduction of our heroine, was descended from the younger branch of a noble family, not more exalted by rank, than by heredi-

tary virtues; amongst which, valour had ever been indisputably numbered; and he, in all things proved himself a healthy blossom of the root he sprung from. The navy had been the profession of his early choice, and his enthusiastic passion for the service seemed to exclude every other from his bosom,—at least, that of love; for as women could not make, work, or fight a ship, he estimated them as contemptible toys, not worth the serious thought of warriors devoted to their country's welfare. In consequence, he never married; and, continuing almost constantly at sea, he not only signalized himself in the most celebrated feats of nautical glory, but made a large accession of wealth most honourably acquired.

At length, the memorable and decisive victory at Trafalgar leaving little more for naval heroism to perform, and Admiral Oakbury having received a desperate wound in that glorious action, which affected his health, he with less reluctance struck his flag, and condescended to lay up his shattered bark in the comforts of affluence on

shore; and to share which, he invited all the maimed of his ship's company, whose private character met his approbation.

Although Admiral Oakbury—now in his sixty-seventh year—had been educated in the old school of seamen, he retained but little of their imputed roughness, save when a characteristic vein of humour was elicited to evince it; you could therefore scarcely say he brought any thing on shore, to remind you of the element he had nearly passed his life upon, but what landmen admire in its tranquillity;—its depth in his understanding, its clearness in his character, its unruffled surface in his temper, and its treasures.

Returned to his home, with every requisite to make it a haven of comfort, but his suspended health, and bearing that within him to assure him his birth in a better world would be one of ease; yet Admiral Oakbury was not a happy man. The unfortunate fate of an individual allied to his family hung heavily upon his feeling mind; which, had he been in Europe at the period, he should have prevent-

ed: and now the thorn of compunction rankled painfully in his bosom, for having proved an indolent correspondent with his family; for had it been otherwise, even in another quarter of the globe as he then was, he must have known of the circumstances, which led eventually to the misfortunes he deplored, in fully sufficient time to have adopted those measures, that would effectually have averted them.

Now called from his beautiful seat in the Isle of Wight, to receive and welcome his great nephew, Captain Arundel, whom since the battle of Vittoria he had mourned as dead, Admiral Oakbury happened to be in London at this memorable period; and having chosen his own pleasure yacht for his conveyance to the metropolis, its being in town with some of the best hands to navigate it, induced him—fortunately for our heroine—to form a party to attend the allied sovereigns on their visit to the military arsenal at Woolwich.

The boatswain of Admiral Oakbury very shortly brought Terry back, to proclaim the approach of Lord Derville, who, until

he had encountered Terry in the same round of anxious inquiry, had been in a state of the utmost distraction; in total ignorance of the fate of his sister, and of our heroine.

"Do not imagine, my fair prize, for such I may claim you, as the waters yielded you to me whilst I was afloat," said the Admiral to Rosabella, "that I am on the contrary *your* captive; when I confess there is something like the influence of magic, in every turn and tone of yours, that makes me anxious our acquaintance should not terminate with this day. Should the service not be mine to have you in my convoy homeward, as the approach of this young peer seems to menace, you will inform me, I hope, where with my nephew —who has been very miserable, I can tell you, at having lost all clew to trace you by—I may call upon you to-morrow, to learn what effect terror has had upon you."

The blushing Rosabella had only time to give her address to Admiral Oakbury, and to assure Captain Arundel, "how

much Mr. Monson had regretted his inadvertent omission, which had deprived them all, not only of the pleasure of seeing him, but of the power of making their anxious inquiries after his health; and how sincerely they had all rejoiced at the certainty of being led again to see him, through the medium of Lady Flowerdew;" when she was summoned upon deck to speak to Lord Derville, who had been rowed to the side of the yacht by a party of young gentlemen, who had taken his lordship and Miss Vandelure from the boom of the swamped barge.

The terror Lord Derville had experienced for the lives of all those, whom his parsimony had imperilled, was visibly stamped upon his aspect; for he resembled a patient just restored by the successful efforts of the Humane Society; and his joy on having ocular demonstration of Rosabella's safety was animated and affecting.

His lordship now hastened to inform Rosa of the safety of Miss Vandelure, her two friends, and Mrs. O'Dowd; who all

were on *terra firma*, under the protection of Mr. Foxcraft, at an inn at Deptford; where he wished all his unfortunate party to assemble, speedily to expedite their return home, to have every thing effected that possibility would admit of to ward off evil consequences.

Admiral Oakbury having it in his power to inform Lord Derville to what company the barge belonged, which Lady Meliora and Captain Hawk had been rescued by, his lordship determined to seek that barge without further loss of time; and the kind and gallant admiral reserving to himself the important duty of landing his fair charge in perfect safety, dispatched his own boat, in company with that which conveyed Lord Derville, to bring back intelligence to him when his lordship and sister had landed at Deptford, that he might then embark with our heroine for the same port.

Rosabella, thus by accident intruded on, or rather through kindness detained by Admiral Oakbury, made rapid progress in his favour, through the inartificial sweet-

ness of her manners, and the affecting simplicity of her genuine gratitude; and above all, through the circumstance of her having, in the moment of peril, been thrown on his protection: and now, with her mind relieved from every apprehension relative to the fate of all her companions in danger, she was enabled to make observations upon the aspect of the interesting Arundel, and rejoiced to perceive it wearing a more auspicious appearance, than when she last had seen him.

At length, the royal fleet arrived at Woolwich under a grand salute, and discharge of cannon; and Admiral Oakbury, by the skilful management of his little sloop, gave to his party a complete view of the landing of the illustrious visitors, and their royal conductor, from the admiralty and ordnance barges; and as it was the intention of the admiral's party to debark also, Rosa began to feel herself a most troublesome guest, since the boat to effect this purpose had not yet returned from the service kindness had sent it upon.

With an anxious eye Rosa now regard-

ed every boat that approached; and at length, to her infinite relief, it did arrive; and the landing of the party at Woolwich was promptly effected, when Rosabella taking her grateful leave of Captain Arundel, whom his affectionate uncle would not permit to undergo the fatigue of quitting the yacht, either to accompany her, or to go on shore at Woolwich—she proceeded with Admiral Oakbury to a miserable inn, or rather public-house, recommended by Mr. Foxcraft to humour Lord Derville's propensity.

By Lord Derville and Mr. Foxcraft only was our heroine received; as Mr. Sternham, alarmed for consequences, had set out for town, to ward off danger, by every possible care of himself; whilst the rest of the party had all been compelled to retire, to have their garments more effectually dried, than they before had had it in their power to have accomplished.

Lord Derville made every grateful acknowledgment to Admiral Oakbury, for his preservation and care of our heroine, with an animated warmth of affectionate interest

Rosa did not expect from him; and requested permission to call upon the admiral the subsequent day, to repeat those acknowledgments in the name of the rest of his family; whose gratitude, he could not doubt, would be awakened to an equal glow with his own.

CHAPTER XI.

THE moment the departure of Admiral Oakbury expanded the wings of Rosa, she flew, with the speed of affection's interest, to congratulate her beloved Meliora on her safety, and to do all in her power to lessen the mischiefs her immersion might too possibly occasion; and the restoration to each other of these long attached friends, after a separation which had mutually imperilled their lives, was not a scene of apathy.

Rosa now found her congratulatory embrace claimed also by Mrs. O'Dowd, who was an occupant of the same chamber with Lady Meliora; and who, instead of deploring the danger still menacing them from their perilous accident, was wholly absorbed in lamentation for the destruction of her elegant new costume.

"I am exceedingly sorry for the demo-

lition of your beautiful dress," said Rosabella; "but feel infinitely more concerned about yourself, Mrs. O'Dowd, lest you should suffer from your alarming bath. Do tell me what has been done for you both, to prevent evil consequences?"

"Why, my honey," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "I was hauled up by a parcel of bread cheese and porter people, who, luckily for me, thought quite as much of their dinner as they did of the sight they were afloat to witness; and in preparation for that, there was an excellent fire to dry my outward garments, and to warm some porter, which they made me drink; but as my corsets remained so long wet on me, I have no doubt but I have caught my death: yet, that I would readily compound for, had not my beautiful and stylish dress been ruined."

"As to me," said Lady Meliora, "I had nothing done for me, Rosa, except having my life saved by Captain Hawk, at the hazard of his own."

"Nothing done for you!" Rosa ex-

claimed with strong emotion of alarm; "nothing done for you! Why, what cruel savages you fell amongst!"

"Why, no,—it was not the people's fault: but they were shopkeepers; and after our Shooter's Hill degradation, I did not choose to condescend to receive any services from them."

"Oh, Heavens! Surely you cannot mean, Meliora, that you sat dripping on deck, shivering with the anticipation of every ailment with which you were menaced, through the inspiration of pride. Oh, Meliora! even Charles would have condescended to accept the services of the meanest of the mechanic race, in such a case."

"Oh, child! they were not mean or shabby people; at least, in appearance and manners; for they were most fashionably and elegantly dressed, and might have passed for ladies and gentlemen anywhere, and would have been all hospitality and kindness to me; only I would accept nothing from them, but to allow me to stand unmolested at their kitchen

fire to dry myself; for, learning it was a city barge, I concluded they must be *canaille.*"

"And, admitting they were," answered Rosabella, infinitely distressed at such a perilous instance of pride and absurdity in her beloved friend, "or had you suspected them of crime, instead of merely being some of the honourably industrious, who work in the profitable hives of this proud and flourishing Hybla; you ought, in self-preservation,—in duty to your adoring grandmother, and other friends who regard you, to have gratefully accepted their offered kindness."

"Indeed, my honey," said Mrs. O'Dowd, "had you been driven by your degrading destiny on board the hulks, you ought to have thankfully accepted the services of the gangs you found at work there; and have compounded for their picking your pockets as they dried them."

"I really felt repentance," said Lady Meliora; "but having been so loftily peremptory in my negatives, I could not sneak into yielding; and particularly strong

my repentant fit was in operation, when I found Captain Hawk accepted all their kindness with the greatest condescension; quaffing *segars* and *liqueurs*, and gobbling up every exquisite dainty they profusely offered him;—when it was all in consequence of his potent ridicule of the cits in the boat, ere our satirical propensities were cooled by our bath, that my ill-timed *hauteur* was displayed."

"Well," said Rosa, with a deep drawn sigh of anticipating alarm, "it will be well, my dear Meliora, if you have nothing more to repent, through this ill-timed *hauteur*, than ungraciousness to offered kindness.—But, dear Mrs. O'Dowd, tell me what yet can be done for you both?—Had we not better order a carriage, and proceed immediately home, and send for the apothecary recommended by Lady Elstow, that he may prescribe for you?—And surely you ought to have some strong and warm wine and water, or even tea.—And, who is drying your clothes? and where shall I find them, to see they are properly attended to?"

"The landlady who lent us the clothes we have on has them," said Lady Meliora; "and who strongly urged her cordials upon me:—but she said nothing of tea, for that I would have gladly accepted; and I wish you would get some for me, for I feel as if I did require something to restore internal warmth."

Instantly Rosabella flew on the wings of alarm to the room she had left Lord Derville in, to importune him to order a carriage to be got in readiness, and to expedite the procuring tea for his sister; when she found his lordship in so pitiable a state of distress, for all the trouble and confusion his reprehensible parsimony had thus occasioned; and so shocked by the direful peril they had all been precipitated into, that he was incapable of doing any thing but implore her pardon for the danger he had exposed her to, and entreat her to go for him to Miss Vandelure, and pay her every kind attention.

Accordingly Rosabella was conducted to Miss Vandelure, who had been kindly and judiciously treated by the persons

into whose hands she had fallen; and whom our heroine now found all amiable resignation to the unfortunate interruption to her promised pleasure; but not such tranquil resignation did her young friends from Mrs. Alworthy's evince, particularly Miss Acres, who left nothing to be apprehended of evil consequences accruing to her from the absence of internal warmth; for she stormed with passion at the demolition of her becoming and beautiful dress, before half her friends had been made sick with envy on beholding it; and, at the destruction of all their expectations of the delights they were to be astonished by, on the landing of the sovereigns at Woolwich.

"Instead of which," she vehemently continued, as she paced, with the stamping step of almost phrensied anger, the circumscribed limits of the small chamber she was in—"here we are deposited in a filthy alehouse, plunged up to our knees in sand, and suffocated with the combined stenches of beer, gin, and tobacco, and no attention paid to mitigate our sufferings;

nothing attempted to blunt the severity, or avert the fatality of the dreadful fevers we all have caught.—But we could expect nothing else—nothing in the form of liberality from that parsimony, which, to save a penny piece, plunged us all into a watery grave:—and who, I wish to know, is to indemnify our heirs for our apothecaries' bills, our doctors' fees, and the expenses of our funerals?"

"My dear Miss Acres, I conjure you to compose yourself," said the gentle Miss Vandelure, "and allow not your recent terror, operating upon your easily irritated nerves, to lead you into uttering what, when you recover yourself, you will be grieved for. As to the house we are in, it was fixed upon by my guardian's friend, Mr. Foxcraft, because he knew the landlady to be a most kind-hearted, active woman, likely to do every thing that humanity could prompt for us; whilst, as to the boat we unfortunately embarked in, be assured, it was not parsimony that caused its being chosen, but a noble and laudable resistance to imposition."

" A noble fiddlestick!—But who minds your fine sentimental excuses, Miss Vandelure, for the man you are over head and ears in love with."

" Me! Miss Acres.—Me! in love! How can you utter so unkind, so unjustifiable an assertion?" exclaimed Miss Vandelure, evidently endeavouring to conceal her confusion from the highly distressed and embarrassed Rosa.

" Nothing is unjustifiable that wears the form of truth, Miss Vandelure," retorted Miss Acres; " and deny, if you can, your being in love with this piperly peer; and, mark my words, in what I expect will be some of my last moments.—You will repent giving up my cousin Edwin for him, when you find yourself a state prisoner in his old mouldering haunted castle, in the wild wastes and bogs of Ireland, surrounded by his half starved, half naked savage clans; yourself a half famished feeder on buttermilk and potatoes, decked in linsey-woolsey for your holiday suit; whilst the echo to your sobs and groans will be the chinking of your own hoarded guineas, as

the miser, your jailor, counts them over to gratify his ruling passion."

"Miss Vandelure," said Rosabella, with an overwhelming look of *hauteur* at Miss Acres, which her ardent feelings, wounded by insults thus offered to the name of Derville, inspired—"I intruded here to act as Lord Derville's substitute, to see every thing that circumstances would admit of done for your accommodation; and to ward off, as far as possibility would allow of in this ill supplied place, the evil consequences to be apprehended from your unfortunate immersion."

Miss Vandelure, in a courteous and grateful reply, expressed a wish for some tea; and then, without further delay, to proceed home.

"But," she hesitatingly added, as if her bashfulness was pained at giving utterance to what her heart dictated—"I hope—I trust Lord Derville has used some necessary precautions to prevent any evil consequences from his own bath."

"Lord Derville," said Rosabella, "has had recourse to no precautions whatever,

having lost all recollection of himself in his anxiety for others: however, on my inquiries upon the subject, his lordship informed me he had not been so completely immersed as others: since, in the moment the accident occurred, he was in the act of aiding the change of a sail which elevated him upon the boom; and, being enabled to maintain his station even whilst he fortunately succeeded in raising you to his place of security, he escaped with a very partial wetting."

"You may thank your money-bags for your prompt extrication from the water, Miss Vandelure," exclaimed the irritable and unpolished Miss Acres. "They served as an unfailing cork-jacket upon the occasion:—whilst I—I——"

"Whilst you sunk in the flood," said Rosabella, sarcastically, "although you had an immense tract of one of the finest counties in England to stand upon: so you see, Miss Acres, humanity does not always act the mercenary's part you ascribe to it; therefore, in this case at

least, allow it some other actuating influence."

Miss Acres scornfully tossed her head, as she audibly articulated—"Toad-eater;" whilst Miss Vandelure, blushing brightly, looked all sweetness and gratitude upon Rosa; who now hastened from her to order the beverage she wished for; and to request Mr. Foxcraft to send whatever he thought would be approved of by the angry Miss Acres, to appease her indignation.

Having executed this commission, our heroine returned to her beloved Meliora, to make tea for her; and, with her, to await impatiently for the moment of returning to town: for, although Rosabella had no evil consequences to apprehend for herself, yet she felt all alarm for others; and was most particularly anxious that they might reach Albemarle Street, and have received the instructions of the apothecary, whom the pale hue of Lady Meliora's countenance, and the continued shivering of her frame, determined her to

send for —— ere Lady Derville should have returned from her expedition.

The moment our party arrived at Mr. Freecastle's, Rosa dispatched a summons for Lady Elstow's apothecary; and then, only just waiting to charge the old Ravenswood butler, Conolly, not himself to mention, or allow others to do so, any thing relative to their accident to Lady Derville, but, instantly on her return from Richmond, to call her, to break gently to her ladyship all that Mr. Sternham, in his alarm for evil consequences to himself, had unguardedly suffered to transpire,—and then hurried Lady Meliora to her chamber, and consigned her to her pillow.

As speedily as possible the apothecary arrived, who, upon learning all the dangers Lady Meliora had been exposed to from her complete immersion, and her own imprudence after it, felt serious apprehension for the effect, and prescribed accordingly.

At length Lady Derville returned, and,

to augment the distress of Rosabella relative to the unpleasant communications she had to make to her beloved benefactress, Conolly informed her, when he summoned her to Lady Derville, that he feared he had a disagreeable letter to deliver to his dear lady from Mr. Monson, who had been home about two hours previous to their return; and who, finding his grandmother had really gone on her talked of expedition, seemed greatly chagrined, and then sat down to write to her.

"And which," continued this venerable man and faithful servant, "seemed no easy task to the dear young gentleman, Miss Rosa, for he tore ever so many sheets of paper ere he composed a letter to his liking, which he gave me to deliver with a palsied hand, for all the world as if it was old he was grown; and looking so agitated—and every way, that I did not wish him to look."

Rosabella now, with this new apprehension of impending evil, presented her-

self with as composed an aspect as she could in possibility assume before that affectionate parent, who, she feared, had much anxiety and affliction hovering over her.

CHAPTER XII.

"Rosa! you returned, child!" exclaimed Lady Derville, in astonishment, the moment she beheld her. "What means this, child?—I did not expect to see any of you before evening."

"Yet we are all returned, dear madam," replied Rosa, endeavouring to articulate with composure a new language to her—that of deception; "for so many of us were cowards, and therefore alarmed by the fear inspiring bustle on the Thames."

"And, where are my children?" exclaimed her ladyship, in promptly excited terror.

"Lady Meliora is in her chamber:—Mr. Monson did not accompany us; and Lord Derville, as your ladyship may suppose, is in attendance upon Miss Vandelure."

"Charles not accompany you!—What

could that mean?" faltered out her ladyship.

Conolly now appearing delivered the letter of Mr. Monson to Lady Derville, who received it with astonishment, and trembled in the anticipating alarm of evil as she perused it.

"So!" she exclaimed, in a voice subdued by agitation, as she finished this brief epistle—"the chain of obedience is broken!—My reign of guardian is ended!—I am dethroned by my rebellious grandson!—Mr. Monson has taken French leave, and gone off to Oxford, to be in readiness to behold the allied sovereigns there."

"To Oxford!" said Rosabella, who felt a painful weight of oppressive apprehensions of something worse to learn removed from her bosom; for, although she censured Charles for thus going without his guardian's permission, yet the wish for going was excited by such a propelling influence, she could only consider it as a pardonable juvenile trangression.

"Yes, to Oxford, the gentleman is

gone; and without even asking my permission."

"But, dear madam," said Rosabella, "Conolly informed me of Mr. Monson's having returned home to seek you; and of his being infinitely chagrined at not finding you.—Of course, therefore, he came to do all that duty inspired; and your absence alone caused his transgression."

"Methinks he has a most eloquent advocate in you, Miss Frederick."

"Dear madam," replied Rosa, "did any of your grandchildren ever fail to prove my advocate with you, when I required one?—and can I ever cease to remember that? My pleading is therefore the debt of gratitude;—theirs the voluntary act of spontaneous kindness."

"Well, well, child, I trust it is so:—and that only gratitude impels you to plead for this truant boy.—Certainly, as you say, he might have purposed to pay me the compliment of asking my permission, had he found me at home, because

he intimates such an intention, by saying—'he would not have ventured to set off without my approbation, only there was no time for delay, as the friend—whom my expulsion of him from my carriage at Richmond had fortunately introduced him to, and who had been all kind attention to him since—— who had offered him a seat in a carriage to Oxford, and to allow him to attach himself to their most respectable party in that city, was going to set off immediately; and that, was he to await my return from Richmond to obtain my permission to his going, he should lose the opportunity, which had tempted him out of his respect to me; a temptation, which he trusts I shall deem sufficiently strong, to extenuate his conduct in the business."

Lady Derville, now her first glow of resentment had subsided, began to consider the temptation indeed almost too powerful for the resolution of youth to withstand; and that, therefore, perhaps, her displeasure approached unreasonableness: yet she could not conquer a painful degree of ir-

ritation at the step her grandson had taken, as it excited in her bosom a considerable portion of alarm, to have him, inexperienced as he was, thus go, for the first time, the distance of so many miles from her protection; and with strangers too, of whose morals, not only she, but he must be wholly ignorant, although his well-known pride guaranteed their being of a superior order; and superadded to all was alarm of personal danger amid such a throng and bustle, as must be expected on this unprecedented occasion at Oxford.

All the disquietude the letter of Charles awakened in the bosom of his prophetically alarmed guardian, enchained her thoughts from reverting, for some time, to the singularity of Rosabella, out of all the party that had gone upon the Thames, being the only one visible to her: but, at length, this struck her, and she inquired — "What has become of Mr. Sternham?"

"He is gone, as on the jubilee day," said Rosa, "subdued by his sailing, to his bed."

Whether it was, that the hesitation of Rosabella in this disingenuous reply awakened that suspicion, which other circumstances had caused some floating form of; but Lady Derville instantly proclaimed her intention of going herself to see what detained Lady Meliora; when it became necessary no longer to defer the information "of her ladyship having wet her feet so completely in the leaky boat Mr. Foxcraft had procured for them, that she had persuaded her to go to bed to prevent any evil effect."

Even cautiously as Rosabella conveyed this information, the bosom of this sensitive parent, ever tremblingly alive to all that could in possibility menace the safety of this her darling grandchild, caught at once every agony of alarm; and, in all the dismay of her anticipating apprehensions, she hastened to the chamber of her Meliora, to convince herself she was not drowned. Rushing to the bedside for this conviction, she found her shivering with cold, notwithstanding the extreme heat of the weather.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in an agony of grief, "although you have not been snatched from me in a watery grave, yet you have caught your death in that vile leaky boat, and I shall lose my child,—my darling."

"No, no, *Ava!*" cried Lady Meliora, kissing her, as she endeavoured to smile; "you will not lose me; and if you do, it will not be either Captain Hawk's fault or poor Rosa's, for he ventured his life to——

"To save you from falling overboard," exclaimed Rosa, with breathless impetuosity, as she clasped her beloved benefactress round the waist, to support her in what she feared was pending—a swoon. "You were so wildly anxious to get out of the boat, you nearly fell into the Thames."

"Rosa, this will not do," said Lady Derville, bursting into tears; "the life of Captain Hawk could not have been endangered by merely saving her from falling: the fall had occurred, or his safety could not have been in peril.—Speak, tell me all, my child."

"Why, grandmama, I wanted to see if I could look as graceful on the water as the swans at Ravenswood, so I just dived to my chin in the Thames in expediting my disembarkation from that leaky barge, the sharks, I suppose, *feed* Mr. Foxcraft to imperil us in *to* feed them."

"Rosa," said Lady Derville, fixing her eyes in earnest scrutiny upon her, "can you tell me unfalteringly, and without a betraying blush, that this is the fact—the full extent of all that has occurred,—that Mortimer is safe—that Charles has not occasion to be with his brother, and is absolutely gone to Oxford?"

Rosabella's cheeks could not sustain the scrutiny unchanged; she felt the mantling rosy tell-tale, and therefore, through necessity, compelled to impart more than she had hoped would have been requisite to reveal, she replied—

"The fact was, my dear madam, that the boat let in so much water, and so rapidly, that we should have all been in the most imminent danger, had not so many boats been in contact with us, that we

were instantly aided, and rescued from impending peril.—Mr. Monson, I solemnly assure you, did not accompany us; and Lord Derville is gone in attendance upon Miss Vandelure to Bryanstone Square; whilst Mrs. O'Dowd and Mr. Sternham have crept to their respective nests, to prevent cold from their immersion."

"And why have you not done the same, my dear child?" Lady Derville demanded, her dormant tenderness for our heroine springing to animation, as fear for her health was awakened.

"Because I was so fortunate as to escape all necessity for it, through the prompt assistance of Wilson — Captain Arundel's attached servant."

"Then you have again heard of Captain Arundel," exclaimed Lady Meliora eagerly, a bright flush animating her before ghastly cheek: "and how is he,—where is he?"

"I saw him," returned Rosa; "and so will you to-morrow, for he is impatient to improve his acquaintance with this family."

Lady Derville now hastened to inquire what hands her darling Meliora had fallen into; and soon to her dread terror she learned, that, through her own pride and obstinacy, nothing had been done to avert the danger of her chance of cold, until Rosa had been restored to her; and those shivering fits, which no increase of covering could subdue, soon effectually augmenting her ladyship's alarms, induced her to re-summon Mr. Leech, the apothecary; who, on his second visit, found more cause than even before, to fear that Lady Meliora had a severe indisposition pending over her, which yet seemed to resist the specifics he had prescribed.

The adoring grandmother and the attached friend now took the painful station of watching by the pillow of expected illness; and, from this anxious vigil, Rosabella was at length called to the alarmed Lord Derville, who, on returning home from Mrs. Allworthy's, learned that his sister was ill.

"For mercy's sake, Rosa," his lordship exclaimed, the moment she appeared to

him, "impart to me at once the worst; and tell me, has my unfortunate—nay, I am almost tempted to call it my accursed —economy of this day, signed the death-warrant of my beloved sister?"

"Heaven forbid!" responded Rosa, trembling at his haggard, agitated aspect. —"Heaven forbid that any thing so heart-rending should arise to afflict us!— She certainly has caught a severe cold; but, until to-morrow, Mr. Leech cannot pronounce of what nature:—but, be it what it may, it wears not half so alarming an appearance as you do. In your anxiety for others, you have neglected to use any precaution for yourself; and it is your death-warrant that will be signed by our unfortunate expedition."

"There is nothing the matter with me but mental infliction.—My anxiety has kept me in too high a fever for cold to assail me; and, if it had, I only deserve to suffer; and, if all had occurred which might have resulted from my diabolical parsimony, had my death-warrant been signed at the bar of justice, it would only

have been my desert: and as it even is,—even should my poor Meliora escape a dangerous illness, and Miss Vandelure not discard me for a contemptible miser, as that Miss Acres scrupled not to advise her to before my face, I shall never—never think of this day without horror, shame, and remorse.—Oh! had you all been lost, whilst I, from never having been in danger, must have escaped, my intellects must have been chased for ever.—The anguish I endured when I beheld so many individuals sink, through my fault, from my sight, assures me I should have gone distracted.—Oh! that moment! that moment! even the recollection of its horror almost annihilates my senses."

"But do not allow your thoughts to revert to the dread scene, dear Lord Derville," said Rosa, kindly, much affected by the deep distress he evinced; "at least, until your nerves recover the shock and anxiety you encountered to-day. — But now we are all safe, surely it is time for you to think of yourself.—You have had no dinner I am certain.—Do order some

soup for yourself, and then retire to bed, for your looks proclaim you require rest."

"Yes, Rosa; but I shall not find it on my pillow, strewed with thorns of compunction for this day's adventure; and ever will my pillow be so strewed, if any evil should betide my darling Meliora, through my diabolical economy. Remember, Rosa—remember, that money must be no object in her illness; let all I possess go, if it can restore her to health:—let every physician of eminence in London be called in. Alas! alas! that distance precludes the possibility of calling Percival from Dublin! he is just the man for the present case. His skill would save my sister; his benevolence soothe those around her; and his religion lead him to pour the balm of Christian comfort into my wounded conscience."

"No doubt," said Rosa, "such invaluable physicians are to be found in London too. But, I trust, we shall not now require them."

"Where is Charles?" asked Lord Derville; "I should like to hear his lecture

now upon my feats in parsimony, whilst I am in an humble mood to bear the truths he will unceremoniously utter."

Rosabella now astonished his lordship, by her information relative to his brother; and then, by the gentle magic of her sisterly affection, prevailed upon him to take some tea, since he recoiled from any more substantial nourishment. Whilst he drank it, she conversed with him upon the subject of his self-upbraidings, until by her pious consolations she soothed him into a state of comparative tranquillity; and then persuaded him to retire to his pillow without further delay.

Our heroine's next task was, to try her powers of persuasive eloquence upon her beloved benefactress, to retreat to her bed, when her hour for seeking repose arrived; and to leave Lady Meliora solely to her care, and the faithfully attached Betty's. But the moment Lady Derville was prevailed upon to retire, Betty declared, in the most decided language of kindness and affection, "that she would not allow Miss Rosy to murder herself by sitting up all

night, after being *drowned* in the morning."

Lady Meliora, although subdued by indisposition, could not restrain a smile at her attendant's mode of expression; as she faintly pronounced, "that certainly after being *drowned* in the morning, murdering herself at night would be superfluous; and therefore, she too should insist upon Rosa's going to bed, who still would be in the same room with her," she said, "and therefore at hand, to obey a prompt summons if required."

As a sick chamber is not one we by any means wish to condemn our readers to, we shall not lead them to even a temporary sojourn in Lady Meliora's, whose attack turned out to be a scarlet fever, of so serious a nature, that Mr. Freecastle was compelled to require her ladyship's removal, lest the dissemination of the consequent infection should bring ruin upon his hotel. Accordingly to a lodging-house belonging to Mr. Leech, who always had several in requisition for the accommo-

dation of country patients, was poor Lady Meliora removed, with every care and precaution; attended to her new residence by her attached young friend, and the faithful Betty: and as this lodging, which was the only one to be procured at that period of overflow, that would admit a person in an infectious malady, could only accommodate the patient and her nurses, the almost distracted Lady Derville was compelled to content herself with apartments in a house precisely opposite, where, at a window, she could take her anxious station, and learn from signals how her darling was going on; who had made it her solemn request, that her grandmother and brothers should not be suffered to come near her; but leave her solely to the care of those, who had already embarked in all the dangers of infection. As this was also the solemn entreaty of the affectionate nurses themselves, and enforced by the physicians, who all declared, "the presence of Lady Derville, who had no command over her feelings, would only impede the recovery of their patient," the

almost heart-broken grandmother sorrowfully acquiesced; and as there was only just sufficient accommodation for herself and Dermot in this small lodging, the rest of the family remained in Albemarle Street.

On the third day of Lady Meliora's illness, her life was despaired of; and in all the anguish of her grief and anxiety, Rosa found poor Betty was infected, and compelled to retire to her bed. Thus only to a hireling nurse, who could not participate in her feelings, was she now to look for assistance in her task; but in her own bosom she promptly found a host to aid her; for the powers of affection and gratitude are those that never faint,—that never weary,—that never slumber,—that never despond,—and, firm to their post, they nerved the exertions of Rosa, who unfalteringly watched day after day, and night after night, as tender mothers watch their dying offspring; only turning her eyes from her anxious vigil to supplicate aid from the All-merciful, or to read with eager scrutiny the countenance of the

alarmed physicians; who all unanimously declared, when they at length pronounced their patient out of danger, "that her rescue from death was to be ascribed, under Heaven, to the tender, never-pausing, anxious, and judicious care of her affectionate friend."

But, even when the life of Lady Meliora was pronounced out of danger, the toil of Rosabella's unfaltering attentions could not terminate; for in her convalescent state she required the most active unremitting care. But the nerves of our heroine were new strung, by the cheering presence of hope, still to perform her duty unsubdued; and to bestow more personal attention upon the also convalescent Betty; who, however, in her most anxious moments for the fate of her friend, this young votary of tender benevolence took care should not be neglected.

Neither, when Lady Meliora was pronounced in a fair way of recovery, was the interdict removed to the visits of her family, since infection still reigned; but, with necessary precautions, epistolary in-

tercourse was carried on; and the adoring grandmother, at length, was daily blessed with a view from her window, of the attenuated form of her lately blooming and idolized grandchild.

In these *vis-à-vis* interviews, where the eloquence of action portrayed the feelings of the heart—which, for the first week, Lady Meliora could only sustain for a very short interval, supported in the encircling arms of her friend—they soon remarked they had a new observer, in a male companion of Lady Derville's; who at length, on perceiving he had caught their attention, bowed to them; when they recognized in him Captain Arundel, apparently improved in health; and who, Lady Derville now informed them in her billets, was her daily visitor, and amongst the most anxious inquirers for their health.

And from that moment of recognition too, infinitely to the astonishment of our heroine, Lady Meliora evinced the greatest anxiety relative to her appearance, only submitting to put on such invalide dresses, as she considered becoming to her. Rosa

was at no loss to ascribe all this solicitude for appearance, to a wish for exciting the admiration of her grandmother's visitor; but her astonishment arose from Lady Meliora (who had allowed her voluntary attachment to Lord Montalbert to acquire such power, as to influence the wanderings of her fancy in the delirium of her fever,) bestowing a thought even upon the captivation of any other man.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALTHOUGH the interdict to Lady Meliora's restoration to her family was removed at length, she was not considered sufficiently convalescent to fly from her medical attendants; a furnished house in Sloane Street was therefore taken, as a judicious situation for her, where she was given back to the arms of her grandmother and brothers; whose tender reception of her proved more than the weak state of the poor invalide's nerves could well sustain, particularly when the self-upbraidings of Lord Derville met her ear; and, bathed in tears, she returned their affectionate embraces.

The reception of Rosabella, after all the physicians had recounted of her part in the restoration of this adored child and beloved sister—after all Lady Meliora had herself written upon the subject, could not prove a cold one. Lady Derville clasped

her repeatedly to her bosom, with all the energy of her grateful feelings; and kissed her a hundred times, as she shed her tears of thankful sensibility upon her bosom. Lord Derville too pressed her with grateful fervor to his bosom, as he pronounced her the preserver of his senses: but Charles,—he who one short month since would, with the impetuosity of his ardent feelings, have been first in eagerness to evince his sensibility for her tender care of his sister, now only took her hand into his, that trembled, as its icy coldness chilled hers by the contact; whilst with quivering lip he attempted to articulate: but no sound could escape his lips; and to the grief and dismay of our heroine, he with averted eyes rushed from the room.

Rosa attributed this reception of her, and sudden retreat, to some fearful secret cause, of which the female she had seen with him in the hackney-coach was the source.—Lady Derville ascribed both to love for her *protégée*, which subdued his firmness, in his joy at her escape from contagion; whilst Lady Meliora, alarmed at

his pale cheek and dejected aspect, exclaimed:

"Oh! what can ail my brother? Speak, tell me, Derville, is Charles ill?"

"Of the blue devils, certainly he is," replied Lord Derville. "Upon mine honour, I begin to suspect he has sent his heart in the baggage of the Duchess of Oldenburg; for since his excursion after these royal meteors, I have observed the gentleman's spirits have all absconded; and I have been scarcely able to extract one word an hour from his mute worship."

"Perhaps, anxiety for me, during the period my life was menaced, made my dear Charles so dull a companion," said Lady Meliora.

"No, faith," returned his lordship; "Mr. Monson's polar star managed better for him than that; even sparing him every particle of anxiety upon your account; since, having once expanded his wings, he flew from Oxford to Cambridge, and then soared on his new-fledged pinions of liberty to Portsmouth, to be in readiness to

receive the sovereigns there, whom he then attended to their embarkation at Dover; and during all that excursion, although he wrote to inform me of his health and safety, he took good care never to favour me with his address; so that I could not inform him of your danger, which I should certainly else have done."

"But surely Mr. Freecastle could have conveyed your letter to him, since Charles thought it right to let him know where he was to be found."

"That form was no longer necessary," replied Lord Derville, "since after your encountering that pugilistic trinket-bearer, at the opera, all the suits against Charles were withdrawn, in the vain hope of conciliating Lord Bayswater into forgetfulness of the Amazon's assault of his lordship."

"But all this was so strange,—so very, very singular in Charles, to go upon this tour without consulting grandmama," said Lady Meliora, with a sigh of mingled regret and alarm at her brother's conduct.

"Alas! my child," said Lady Derville, "Charles has broken the chain that bound

him to the authority of his guardian; and I have been too much subdued by my dire anxiety relative to you and your affectionate imperiled nurse, to take any measures for recalling the truant to a recollection of the power over him, with which his father's will invested me."

"And now, I fancy, madam, your attempts at recalling the gentleman to his duty will prove frustraneous," said Mr. Sternham, who had until now sat in sullen silence, as Rosabella had, with firm dignity, repulsed his offered embrace of tender welcome to the family circle. "Mr. Monson has found associates, that will initiate him into other lessons, than duty to his guardian."

"How do you know, sir?" demanded Lord Derville fiercely, perceiving his venerable grandmother becoming alarmingly pale.

"Nay, my dear lord," responded Mr. Sternham, with a sycophantic smile, "I know not any thing absolutely: I only conjecture apprehensively, from his frequent and lengthened absence; since,

whilst your lordship's engagements called you to Bryanstone Square, and Lady Derville was by her tender anxiety led away from our diminished circle, Mr. Monson rarely ever honoured Mrs. O'Dowd and myself with his company more than at dinner; for, that ended, he left us to a *tête à tête*, unless we chose to break the monotony of our evenings, by adjourning to my revered patroness's lodgings, to offer our poor consolations; but there we never found the gentleman upon that indispensably dutiful mission."

Lady Meliora's spirits, weakened by recent indisposition, were become unusually susceptible, and she burst into an agony of tears, at this alarming account of her brother; which awakening all the tender anxiety of her grandmother to soothe, monopolized for the moment every thought from this fear-inspiring intelligence; whilst Lord Derville, highly incensed at his preceptor for this ill-timed history of his brother, hesitated not to speak his opinion of its unkindness and imprudence.

"More especially, sir," he added,

"when you have only surmises to ground all these alarming suspicions upon which you have awakened. It is very possible, sir, Mr. Monson never left your society to seek any other associates but his own anxious thoughts; for although Meliora was pronounced out of danger ere he returned from his excursion, her tender nurse was not out of danger of infection; and to my own certain knowledge, he has been seen pacing the street for hours each evening before my sister's lodgings."

Lord Derville, in his anxiety to remove one dagger from the bosom of his grandmother through this invidious insinuation of improper associates, plunged another into it, by this testimony of his brother's tender interest for the fate of Rosabella; and whilst unintentionally inflicting this wound, he wholly disconcerted the plan of Mr. Sternham, to convince our heroine Mr. Monson bestowed no thought upon her; but soon, by the expression of his grandmother's countenance, with the varying tints of Rosabella's cheeks, his lord-

ship awakened to a recollection of his inadvertence; and, in haste to turn the thoughts of all into another course, he changed the conversation to his own expected happiness, through his union with Miss Vandelure.

"And, as one wedding in a family is often the harbinger of another," he continued smiling, "you must replenish your looks, young ladies, as speedily as possible; for you know not what the fates may decree. And you have a famous cargo of fine things anticipatingly ready, Meliora; since the moment the Russian and Prussian wonders deserted our island, your dress-makers recovered from their idle mania; and such a reinforcement of finery has poured in from all the venders of fashions, that, concluding your own banker will scarcely find cash for your payments, I have arranged for your application to mine."

Lady Meliora again found her feelings unusually susceptible, and tears began to flow, more through the influence of joy than gratitude, for the first dawn of gene-

rosity her elder brother had ever evinced towards her; when Rosabella, anxious to avert those tears, turned to a cheering theme, by exclaiming:

"The subject of dress naturally reminds me of our honey. Where can she in possibility be, not to present herself amongst the first of good-nature's votaries, to congratulate my dear Meliora upon her recovery? Surely she cannot fear us now?"

"No, she is not afraid of you," replied Lord Derville; "but Captain O'Dowd arrived yesterday, and they continue in Albemarle Street; however, they are to come and see you in the course of the day; the one for introduction, the other to rave of her *Parisian costume*, of which the Captain has brought her a freight."

"Derville," said Lady Meliora, whose tears were now dried by a suddenly imbibed anxiety to learn tidings of a captive she flattered herself she had enslaved, "Derville, you talked of one wedding in a family sometimes proving the harbinger of others; and I suspect you spoke through Delphic inspiration; and grandmama will

be the next bride; for Rosa and I can bear testimony of seeing her demure ladyship repeatedly *tête à tête*, at her obscure and secluded lodgings, with one of the two handsomest men in existence; young, and a soldier too!"

"You mean Major Arundel—for he has been promoted—I conclude, child," said Lady Derville gravely, her prudish feelings now on the alert, to repel the degrading jest. "Major Arundel, who kindly paid me many visits to inquire for you and Rosa for himself; and for Rosa, at the particular desire of his uncle, Admiral Oakbury."

"And there will be wedding the third!" exclaimed Lord Derville, smiling; "for absolutely, I think, this gallant admiral has been taken captive on the flowing waters, by the prowess of your charms, Miss *Blush*abella."

"Major Arundel has accompanied his uncle into the country for a few days," said Lady Derville; "but on their return, I doubt not we shall see them; for they

both seem mightily and suspiciously anxious about Miss Rosabella."

"What! Major Arundel, grandmama?" exclaimed Lady Meliora, in a tone of eagerness, accompanied by a blush that betrayed anxiety.

"I am not in the gentleman's confidence," returned her ladyship, in sudden reminiscence of zeal for the prosperity of her chaplain's suit, repentant for having awakened any hope in the mind of Rosa of her captivation of a more eligible suitor than Mr. Sternham; "and certainly, the anxiety he evinced for the termination of your illness might have been excited by your influence, as well as by Rosa's."

Lady Meliora again blushed, and looked pleased; whilst she mentally aspirated a wish, that her grandmother had penetrated a little into the true cause of that anxiety; and then, after a few moments' pause, she said:

"*A-propos* of warriors. Who can tell me aught of one, to whom my gratitude is debtor, Captain Hawk?"

"After the review in Hyde Park, and

all other services to be performed by the royal visitors," replied Lord Derville, "Captain Hawk was compelled to accompany his regiment into Surrey; but when he called with his farewell inquiries, he talked of obtaining leave of absence, to come and renew those inquiries:—though I trust, Meliora, you have not given him any encouragement to enter upon any wild-goose chase after you."

"I thank your lordship for your fraternal *politesse*," said Lady Meliora, endeavouring to laugh, to effect the concealment of a little embarrassment, awakened by consciousness,—"for no one but a Goth of a brother would dub a fine young woman a wild-goose."

The sounding of the street-door knocker proclaimed visitors, and immediately after Conolly announced—

"Captain and Mrs. Alermont O'Dowd."

Mrs. O'Dowd now appeared, in the height of Parisian fashion in every respect but in the altitude of her bonnet, which was merely a straw case for her head; and the moment she had affectionately kissed

and congratulated the two young friends, just emancipated from the chamber of dangerous sickness, she introduced her *caro sposo* to all whom he had not already been presented to.

Captain O'Dowd was about the age of his better half, and like her was a genuine Hibernian; and that large portion of good temper and cheerful sunshine, his comely countenance portrayed, was but reflected faithfully from the serenity of his bosom.

In his profession he was also the genuine character of it, valiant and humane, generous and careless; as a foe to be feared, as a friend to be loved; yet, from having been sent a wild Irish boy from a provincial school, to commence his career of life, far from the refining society of the female world, upon the wide expanse of ocean, his manners wanted that polish, which the new maritime school presents with burnish equalling any other. Nor had nine years' captivity in France increased those refinements he entered that country defective in; since the nation he had ever conquered at sea he held cheap on land;

and as he considered the stock of French nobility and gentry either extinct or banished, he proudly determined to acquire no habit of the mushroom race he was thrown amongst. Hence never did he battle upon the high seas with more invincible prowess, than he had done to prevent the natural vivacity of his own disposition from imbibing a particle of French frivolity; and in these nine years of unconquerable hostility to Gallic gaiety, his own wild sprightliness had mellowed down to pleasing cheerfulness.

"My honey, dears!" Mrs. O'Dowd exclaimed, the moment she was seated, "this man, though I was always tormenting you with my fears of his coming home to me in the form of a French monkey, is returned the most complete John or Paddy Bull in existence; and what think you? if I want his company, I must trudge about on my feet with him, and not in my elegant landau I have bespoke; as he pretends the French humbugs upon carriages have taught him antipathy to the motion of one; and this antipathy, you must know, I suspect to be all

sly pretence, to shake off my sweet society, that he may cheer himself with some French mushroom, all head, and straight uncurving stem."

"All head!" cried Lord Derville; "so, so, madam, this fit of apprehensive jealousy has, I perceive, led you into the opposite extreme of no head. Ay, this accounts for your not exhibiting, with the rest of your Parisian costume, that bonnet you displayed to me yesterday, with such towering exultation, as the very pinnacle of fashion."

Mrs. O'Dowd groaned; the Captain smiled; and Lady Meliora desired to know, "what all this apparent grief on one side, and mirth on the other, could possibly mean?"

"You must know, fair lady," Captain O'Dowd replied, "my better half is so completely a sailor's wife, in her passion for finery; and so enthusiastic an admirer of foreign costume; that to please her, I had a first-rate bonnet built for her, the highest that ever was launched from Parisian milliner's dock; and which, with

much difficulty, I conveyed safely to her. This she did me the honor to admire so exceedingly, that she hoisted it this morning, when I invited her to accompany me to Westminster Bridge, to take boat for Rotherhithe, where I had business relative to the orphan boy of a lately deceased fellow-prisoner of mine. We weathered the streights of St. James's and Westminster famously, only exciting some staring and starting, and politely tacit marks of dire amazement, at beholding the formidable casque from the Castle of Otranto,—which a giant's substantial pericranium only could sustain in Italy,—nodding with graceful ease upon a fair gentlewoman's head in England:—but sad reverse awaited us on the coast of Barbary; for no sooner had we landed at Rotherhithe, than the whole race of savages came down upon us, with their war-hoops and wild cries: in fact, no pillory exhibition ever collected a more turbulent mob, or elicited a finer concert of groans, hoots, and hisses, and revilings of the French Dolly; and, after some brother tars had scented me out as a mess-

mate, she got denominated 'the *tarred* and feathered French Dolly.'

"'My poor Dora!' said I, in the small voice of compunction, for having brought her into such a rough sea, 'you must strike the French flag, and hoist an English one of truce at the first bonnet shop we descry; for it will be better policy to change your colours, than to come in for a broadside from a missile weapon I see preparing for you—even a shower of mud.'

"'Ah, my!' she exclaimed, capering from side to side of the pavement, in the most ludicrous dismay, gazing with eyes distended by terror, all around, for a bonnet magazine.

"And now, her roving eyes obtaining a glimpse of the haven she coveted, disdaining the impeding ceremony of reserve, she unfurled her cambric petticoat as a mainsail, and hoisted it over her shoulders, converting herself into a white lily, to screen her Parisian dress from the pollution of missile wrath; and scudding off with the rapidity of an Atalanta, took shelter in the bonnet harbour, when I could not

for the soul of me forbear joining in the chorus of risibility, struck up by the now merry multitude, who swore 'her heels were as truly Gallic as her head.'

"At length out the Dora sailed, her head-mast sporting a British ensign; and, with a look of self-complacency, casting a glance around, tacitly proclaiming an expectation of being graciously permitted to depart in peace;—but no such sneaking exit was admissible, for she now had rendered herself popular to John Bull, by submitting to his national prejudices; and now the din was changed to loud cheering, and her three-times-three applauding escort never forsook her, until, amid the most enthusiastic huzzas, she found safe mooring in the house of my late messmate's father."

"And pray," demanded Lady Meliora, "why did you not kindly contrive to let us see this attractive first-rate, ere she was lost?"

"Lost!! Ah, my! my honey! is it my elegant Parisian bonnet lost! No, no, I was not such a wild Irish goose as that,

neither.—I would as soon lose my head itself.—I left it at the bonnet shop,—to be sent for."

"Ah, Dora, my poor honey!" said Captain O'Dowd, "you *may send*;—but, unless you had dispatched a *habeas corpus* for its removal, with a strong body guard, instead of nervous Mrs. Dolittle, I would not ensure your chance of seeing it again."

"Ah, don't! have done talking such shocking nonsense, Alermont; to be throwing me into a fever, after all the peril you brought me into, in that Gothland you took me so cruelly to.—Why, my honey! would'nt I see it more? You cannot think the decent shopkeeper, I left it in charge of, would steal the bonnet off my head."

"As to that, I conclude you took it off your own head.—However, I think they may prove conscientious subjects of the realm, who may hand it over to the revenue as a contraband commodity."

"Don't be frightening me out of my wits with your capers of hideous fancy, now. Sure, you know, it cannot be seized,

as you, as a conscientious subject of the realm, paid your *duty* to the laws for every shred you brought me from France."

"Ay, Dora, but how should they know that? And before I can procure my proper vouchers to prove the fact, your bonnet may be unrigged, and dispersed about London, in twenty-four moderate-sized bonnets at least."

"I declare, Alermont, you make my very flesh creep, to listen to your terrifying prognostics about my beautiful bonnet; and I shall be as nervous as poor Dolittle herself, until I see her return safely with it, to put me once more in high feather."

"But should it even have escaped a conscientious restitution to the revenue," replied the captain, "the carriage for its conveyance home must indubitably be opened, to give it necessary altitude; when becoming visible to the multitude, who we all know will use no ceremony in climbing into the very vehicle, to see what foreigner Madame Dolittle has got sitting by her, in the high plumed majesty

of state; and Heaven only knows what outrage disappointment may excite them to, on not finding the Jaggernaut*, or the Great Mogul's chief Bramin, in a pagoda of feathers, as appearances sanctioned them to expect."

"I do declare," exclaimed Mrs. O'Dowd, her countenance portraying a ludicrous commingling of real apprehension, and affected tribulation, "you will either terrify me into a fever or ague, before the arrival of Dolittle to announce my fate."

"Which, I trust, may prove a happy one," said Lady Derville; "and that Mrs. Dolittle will, by the safe convoy of your treasure home, restore you to yourself; as I very much wish my old cheerful friend, Mrs. O'Dowd, and her gallant *caro sposo*, to give me the pleasure of their company this day at dinner, to celebrate the recovery of my grandaughter, the escape of my dear Rosa from infection, and the emancipation of both from quarantine."

"To prove to your ladyship with what

* Indian idol.

pleasure we accept your kind invitation," Mrs. O'Dowd replied, "it was our mutual wish, that you would make us happy by desiring us to join your *en famille* party to-day—not that we are yet become weary of looking out for those beauty-spoiling lines in each other's phizzes, which nine years' separation have imprinted, to dismay us, as we alternately gape at each other; but because I want, by conversing with my young friends, to find conviction of their being absolutely emancipated from the fangs of peril; and Alermont wants to fathom how hyperbolically I wrote, when I endeavoured to describe my prodigies of Ravenswood to him."

At this moment Terry appeared with a parcel for Mrs. O'Dowd, which he announced as having been brought by Mrs. Dolittle, who had it in her power to allay all her mistress's apprehensions, by tidings of the safe deposit of the Parisian bonnet-pile at Mr. Freecastle's; and after Mrs. O'Dowd had expressed the real rapture she experienced upon the occasion, and

acted an amusing display of even more, she, addressing Lady Derville, said—

"Anticipating the pleasure in store for us of dining here, I ordered this little parcel to be brought to me, as I was anxious to deliver a few testimonial keepsakes Alermont has brought you of his deliverance from a nine years' bondage in France,—or, as I have always called it, Gaul*—for such, my heart ever persisted, is its right denomination."

Captain O'Dowd beamed a glance of affectionate rapture at his wife, as she spoke, that convinced her friends, she had no cause to complain of the influence of French fascination.

Mrs. O'Dowd, having unclosed her parcel, now presented each of the Derville family with a beautiful musical trinket, reserving one for the absent Charles; whilst to Rosabella her offering of amity was silk and lace, sufficient to make her a

* Gall.

dress of more cost and elegance, than she had ever been the possessor of.

Lady Derville made her acknowledgments, in a manner suited to her age and dignity; and Lord Derville expressed his most gratefully; but the two young ladies proclaimed their thanks by an emphatic kiss, which Captain O'Dowd instantly claimed as his due; for he said, "he, not his wife, had been the purchaser of the gewgaws: he had conveyed them in safety; and whatever recompense they could pretend to was his by equity."

"Then take them from your wife," said Lady Meliora, laughing, "to whom they were given in trust for you."

"No, no, no," he replied, "the nectar must come pure from its source;" when Lady Meliora, without further parley, allowed him his demand; and Rosabella, in the perfect innocence of her grateful heart, followed the acquiescent example of her friend, to the vehement ire of Mr. Sternham, who cast a furious look upon them both, as he muttered his

anathemas, "upon the licentious latitude of the age—the infectious libertinism of the metropolis, which had thus so glaringly corrupted that prudent reserve of conduct they had arrived adorned with from their uncontaminated home."

"But, most censorious sir!" exclaimed Lady Meliora, turning archly round to him, having heard all of his muttered philippic, "I could not display my cloven foot of licentiousness in that home;—since, whom had I to give my balmy kisses to, but you or Conolly?—You would have spurned at them; and to Conolly, the pride of my house could not stoop;—whilst as to Rosa,—she indeed, to a certainty, may be accused of having allowed the licentious breath of this wicked metropolis to corrupt her;—or probably the libertinism of Captain O'Dowd;—since her prudent reserve at Ravenswood was assuredly voluntary, she having temptations there that I lacked; for two extremely fascinating young men, who were not her brothers, were always at hand, and very ready to receive her caresses;

and besides too, her wings were sometimes expanded; and she could climb rocks, and encounter vile sharpers, to put things into her innocent head, not exactly suited to meet your approbation."

The always sallow cheek of Mr. Sternham blanched to a more ghastly hue; and with a disturbed look, that seemed to betray apprehension, he started from his seat, and precipitately left the room; whilst poor Rosabella changed to the pale aspect of death, as her sad heart sickened at the retrospection this allusion of her friend had awakened; and luckily for her, the flight of her ungenial suitor secured her emotion from observation.

"Hey day!" Lady Meliora exclaimed, "why surely, our sage preceptor must have been some consociate of that aforesaid sharper, who, by his dismaying account, came about Ravenswood to kidnap poor me; and he fears, from my innuendoes, that I have detected him."

"Or rather," said Lord Derville,

" he has detected this—by his jealousy dubbed—sharper in designs upon Rosa, which your innuendoes have taught him to fear she has discovered.—Come, Rosa, help us to unravel this mystery. Tell us all you know or suspect about this formidable sharper. Did you come at his name, or at least, his *nom de guerre?*"

" Y-e-s," said Rosa, affecting a little cough, to conceal the faltering of her voice; " he—he is in the army, Lord Derville, and not a sharper, as Mr. Sternham reported him."

" He might report erroneously as well as Mr. Sternham, my dear," said Lady Derville.

" But was this assertion of his military character merely his own?" demanded Lord Derville.

" Not merely," responded Rosa: " he is the intimate friend of Mr. Trench, and of Captain Gore; and I met him, as a highly esteemed guest, in the house of the latter at Myrtle's Town."

"You met at Myrtle's Town! An inmate with you at Captain Gore's!" said Lady Derville, her eyes now suddenly opening to a belief, that here was a solution to all her *protégée's* sadly altered aspect and spirits; and a balm to assuage every apprehensive pang, relative to any design upon the heart of Mr. Monson; and, after gazing a few moments scrutinizingly at Rosa, she added, in the subdued voice of pitying kindness—

"Go, my love, with your beautiful gift, to your room to secure it from soil, through too much manual inspection; as the knocker has performed the part of herald to some visitors."

Lady Derville felt no longer a doubt, that this man had purloined the heart of Rosa; and, now her fear for the entanglement of her grandson was suspended, the most tender pity sprung up in her bosom, for what she believed to be the unpropitious attachment of her *protégée*, whom she devised this ex-

cuse for sending out of the room, to recover her firmness, and elude the eye of further detection of her hopeless love.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE knock at the door had been the harbinger of Charles Monson, who, in his ascent of the stair-case, catching a glimpse of Rosabella above him, darted after her; and, with all the trepidation of powerful emotion, put a small parcel into her hand, which, as he closed it on his presentation, he pressed with trembling energy to his lips, to his heart; and then made a precipitate descent to the dining room, where he inclosed himself as secure from interruption at that hour, to endeavour to renovate his subdued composure, ere he should present himself before his grandmother.

Rosabella instantly retreated to her chamber; but the distressing emotion, and almost wild despair of Mr. Monson's aspect, suspended every thought of her own individual misery, that had filled her bosom

when she had quitted the drawing room; and ere she had time to explore the parcel thus affectingly given to her, tears of sympathy, for whatever grief it might be which so unhinged him, burst from her eyes. This however, for his sake, she resolutely strove to vanquish, in her apprehension of Lady Meliora's finding her weeping; who, by natural inquiries relative to the cause, might pose her how to answer, without awakening suspicion of their being tears of sympathy.

At length, as she held the parcel, perceiving it contained a billet, as well as a small leathern case, she hastily opened the former, and read—

"Accept, inestimable Rosa, the accompanying bauble, which contains hair of all those individuals, from whose hearts you averted the dire wound of that arrow, which hung suspended over the life of Meliora Monson. It is an offering, Rosa, from the gratitude of him, who, in defiance of every inauspicious frown, would lay his now completely vanquished heart at your

feet, had not cruel Destiny intervened with its interdicting voice: for through my own puerile folly—the imbecility of my fatal inexperience, I have raised up a dire barrier between us, that nothing short of miracle can remove.

"Oh, Rosa, dear beloved Rosa! even but a few days since the hope glowed brightly in my bosom of obtaining you for my life's blessing; but every hope is now blighted, in the bosom of ——

"Your adoring,

"wretched friend,

"CHARLES MONSON."

Again, and again, Rosabella perused this alarming billet; and her tears, which a few moments before had flowed in sympathy for the distress of Mr. Monson, now seemed frozen at their source, by that apprehensive terror, which had conveyed its icy chill through the sad belief, that Charles—her beloved as a brother, Charles—the champion of her childhood,—the friend of her riper years, had undone himself by marriage,—had been drawn in by art and

villany, which his inexperience could not parry, to wed unworthily. As she wrung her hands in agony at this supposition, a ray of consolation suddenly presented itself through the sentence in his billet, which declared, "that nothing short of miracle could remove the barrier he had placed between them;"—for, had the only barrier between them been a wife, that required no miracle to remove; since to die was no miracle, and death was possible for the dissolution of wedlock's bonds. But now, by this recollection convinced, that marriage was not the source of his undoing, she found herself thrown on the deserts of barren conjecture for what had caused the distress of Charles Monson.

At length, through the aid of diligently toiled for firmness, Rosabella found herself equal to the task of appearing before the observers in the drawing-room; but, as she was preparing to descend for this purpose, she recollected the varied conflicts of her mind had yet prevented the inspection of her recent gift. On opening the case to explore its contents, she per-

ceived it indeed a gift, that bore ample testimony to the gratitude of the donor: for she found a row of very fine pearls for the neck, to which was suspended a diamond Maltese cross—small, but brilliant; at the back of which was set a lock of Lady and Lord Derville's and Mr. Monson's hair, platted, and surmounted by a motto eloquently expressive of the sense Charles had of their united obligation to the affectionate Rosabella.

The beauty of this gift, and the gratitude it awakened, first monopolized every thought of Rosabella; but soon a sensation of painful, alarm superseded her pleasing contemplations; for the question suddenly suggested itself, of how Charles could, in possibility, afford to make her such an offering, after his late present of pearls to his sister, and whilst he was embarked in the expenses of London. The apprehension of his having incurred a debt, to evince his gratitude to her, for merely endeavouring, as she pursued the impulse of affection, to repay some of the incalculable obligations she owed the Der-

ville family, now filled her bosom with dismay; yet it was a subject of too much delicacy to presume to speak upon to Charles. However, as she had determined to show to her benefactress the present of her grandson, she trusted, if her ladyship's fears were equally awakened, she would make every proper inquiry; when, if necessary, the gift might be sacrificed to diminish at least the extent of his imprudence: and to this ingenuousness and respect towards her beloved protectress she perceived no impeding interdict, since Mr. Monson would not have given her so superb an ornament, had he not intended she should wear it; and its having been enriched by a lock of Lady Derville's hair proved her ladyship was in the secret of his meditating some offering of his gratitude to her.

Charles had been almost as successful as Rosabella in remanding his firmness to its station; they therefore both appeared at dinner with no trace visible, to the eye of common observation, of the sadness of their hearts, save in their faded bloom, and

in the absence of their wonted sparkling animation: but the anxious Lady Derville was no common observer, and clearly she penetrated, that both were mentally miserable; and, as she now believed her *protégée* had no design upon the heart of her grandson, she pitied both for the hopelessness of their attachment. For that Rosa's was hopeless she concluded from its effect, and that Charles's was so, the pre-occupation of Rosa's heart informed her; and peculiar kindness in her attentions to both was the consequence of that commiseration.

In defiance of the wary watchfulness of Mr. Sternham, Rosabella procured a momentary opportunity to thank Charles for his gift; and to implore him to impart to her the source of his distress.

"Oh! it is nothing—nothing, Rosa," he replied, with the catching respiration of extreme emotion: "Time steals from every sorrow; and time can reconcile us to the bitterest disappointments."

"Alas! why not confide whatever thus oppresses you to Lady Derville? you cannot surely have a truer friend."

"She could not be competent to advise, whose education of me has been one system of error. Had I been reared for this life as the ordeal for another; and not, as if, like the unsophisticated babe, the mantle of my innocence was to prove my talisman—my preservation from offence, and shield of defence,—I had escaped the present misery I endure:—but the self-sufficiency of home-nurtured arrogance has been humbled. I, who believed myself superior in intellect to the little world of circumscription that I lived in, have been led to discover myself a blind, a credulous fool; and, for my folly, I must smart in silent repentance, until the hour arrives when I must reveal it to the world. But, be comforted for me, dear Rosa. In a few days I shall be more reconciled to my humbled fate: and—and if you never address me in the voice of your magically subduing kindness—never turn your pitying glance upon me; even to my blasted hope of happiness with you, I may in time become, perhaps, resigned."

Rosa, now hastily turned from him to

conceal how much she sympathized in his distress; but, as she did so, softly articulated—

"Have you forgotten Major Arundel? He was a man you once thought worthy of your friendship. Seek him out on his return to town, and give him your full confidence."

Just at this moment a loud bombardment of the street-door proclaimed the arrival of fashionable visitors, and Miss Vandelure and Miss Acres immediately appeared; the former, as she always was, adorned with smiles, and every enchantment of seductive sweetness and beauty; the latter, restored to good temper, and overwhelmingly loaded with every allurement to play off against the heart of Mr. Monson, whom she considered transcendently handsome, and far—far beyond his brother, although an earl's coronet held its ponderous weight in the scale against him.

As Mr. Foxcraft was the escort of these young ladies to Sloane Street, the two small drawing-rooms of this small house—

taken by Lady Derville, for its airy situation, upon her grandaughter's account—were now as well filled with guests as anxiety for her beloved Meliora's health allowed her to wish; it was therefore no source of pleasure to Lady Derville, when, shortly after, Lady Wilemore and Miss Standard were announced, with Captain Standard, who held a company in a second battalion of infantry, in expectation of being immediately disbanded, and whom his manœuvring aunt had brought upon the promising hope of subduing the heart of Lady Meliora, to eke out his half-pay by her thousands.

Lady Wilemore, lest her speculating purpose should be developed, soon after she was seated endeavoured to make it appear it was merely accidental her arrival in Sloane Street: having, she said, gone to Freecastle's to pass an hour with her honey, to congratulate her on the return of her Trafalgar hero, she had heard she was gone to Lady Derville's, where, as there could be afforded her additional pleasure in an extent of gratulation, she had for-

lowed her dear honey, to proclaim her heart inspired participation in all that contributed to the happiness of the party assembled; and then volubly pronounced, as a fact, her fiat, stamped as incontrovertible, that Lady Meliora looked divinely after her recent illness, and Miss Frederick deplorably from her confinement: but, ere any acquiescence or dissent in these sentiments could be offered, Lady Flowerdew was announced, and entered splendidly and beautifully attired for the Prince Regent's magnificent ball.

Lady Flowerdew's congratulations to Lady Meliora upon her recovery were not merely those of politeness, for they were also kind; whilst, to Rosabella, her gratulations upon her double escape from a watery grave, and from an infectious illness, wore the stronger energy of affection.

"But you must know," said her ladyship, soon after she was seated, "that poor Major Arundel is beginning to feel a serious alarm upon your account, fair Lady Rosabella, through the strong symptoms

arising about Admiral Oakbury, of having fallen as many fathoms deep in love with you as your party fell into the Thames."

"So then," exclaimed Lady Derville, "you were upset in the water, and I but just escaped losing my children.—Oh! Mrs. O'Dowd!—Oh, Mr. Sternham! why did you deceive me?"

"Why?" replied Mrs. O'Dowd,—"because, my honey, you are so palpable a coward, where these brats of yours are concerned, that there was no use, by augmenting your love, 'through the dangers they had braved,' to infect you with the hydrophobia upon their account."

"Pray do not let us talk any more about that unpropitious day," said Rosa, hastily, on perceiving tears straying down the cheeks of Lady Derville, and Lord Derville with aspect portraying horror and remorse; "but do, pray, allow poor Lady Meliora, and myself, to learn something of what has been passing in the world, while we have been out of it. Pray when is the *fête* in the parks to be given?"

"I admire excessively your starting a topic, you artful Rosa, to prevent our being more fully informed of this gallant admiral's passion for you," said Lady Meliora, gaily; who, all anxiety to learn the exact nature of the alarm Major Arundel was beginning to experience upon her friend's account, resolved to manœuvre for the gratification of her curiosity. "So now do, that is a dear Lady Flowerdew, tell us what Major Arundel apprehends."

"Why, he says," replied Lady Flowerdew, smiling, "that he apprehends his hopes, as presumptive heir to Admiral Oakbury, may be destroyed by the potent charms of an enchantress: but I rather suspect his ingenuousness upon this assertion, and that his apprehensions have another basis, relative to the destruction of his hopes, through the admiral's superior attractions. But, however it may be, I I have had a petition presented to me, for obtaining for some individuals a little delicious treat of this young sorceress's society; and, as my own wishes are amongst the petitioners, I trust Lady Derville will

kindly allow 'the interesting invalide and the tender nurse,' who, by all I can hear, both deal in magic spells, to pass from Saturday to Monday next with me at Wimbledon; and even short as that period is,—circumscribed by my lord's protracted parliamentary attendance, and my engagements in town, through this everlasting winter,—it may prove of service to the fair invalide."

Lady Meliora, who impatiently longed to discover which had fascinated the handsome and elegant major most,—the interesting invalide or nurse, made known, by signals to her grandmother, that it was her wish to have this invitation accepted. Accordingly, with all due courtesy, it was so, to the infinite chagrin of Lady Wilemore, whose speculations for Captain Standard were threatened with overthrow through this visit, where, she doubted not, in addition to this formidable major, Lord William Rentlorn would also be; besides, too, she had wanted to manœuvre for her niece Alinda to be invited on this party, and now she was terribly afraid her exclu-

sion was signed; yet, determined to know if she must relinquish all hope, she demanded from her dear friend—"If her party at Wimbledon was to be numerous that week?"

"An overflow," answered Lady Flowerdew, "or my invitation had not been limited merely to the young ladies of this family: but, at some future day, I trust I shall have the very great pleasure of performing Mrs. Quickly to all this house at Wimbledon, and my honey dear and her *caro sposo*."

"You must take care then, dear Lady Meliora," said Lady Wilemore, affecting a tone of deep interest for her, "and not allow the temptation of so large and gay a party to lead you into imprudences incompatible with your present delicate state of health. Indeed, you ought to get an act of parliament for enchaining Alinda by your side, as your talisman,—your amulet, she is so tender and attentive to every one who is out of health; and, so prudent, she never ceases reminding them to be careful."

"Oh, but I should rather procure a decree in parliament for keeping off prudent interposers ready to call me to order, when the evil was in me to transgress," replied Lady Meliora, smiling; "but grandmama, I dare say, would very much like to lay an embargo upon Miss Standard, and send her with me to Wimbledon, deposited in my ridicule, as ventriloquists seem to do their small voiced respondent in their pocket, to perform for me the tender and attentive part of the kind Miss Prudence."

"But, Oh, la!" cried the pert Miss Acres, who now felt she exceedingly abominated Miss Standard; because she detected her in the same design upon the heart of Mr. Monson that she had formed, —"it would not be playing Miss Standard fair, to have her amazing perfections *ridiculed*; nor would she agree to having them incased out of view."

"If I make a display of any counterfeit ones, they deserve to be incased in as severe a confinement as Miss Acres can sentence them to," replied Miss Standard,

in the soft melting voice of speculating mildness: "and then, it will be as severe as my most malignant foe could wish—so very potent is the wit of that young lady."

"La!" exclaimed Miss Acres, affecting the most ludicrous start and stare of astonishment, "have you a foe? Why, I thought every one *doted* upon you. I am sure the evening I happened to go in the same coach with you, from Sir Peter Style's to the Opera, I counted, in the distance from Arlington Street to the Haymarket, one and thirty personages, of all ages and ranks, you informed us, doted on you, beside the Mayor and Corporation of the City of ———, with the Canons and Minor Canons, and the Dean and Chapter, who dubbed you their Standard of Perfection."

"Really Miss, a—a," said Lady Wilemore, indignantly; and forgetting her name, to evince her contempt; "I may take it upon me, Miss Plowman, to affirm what my niece's modesty will not allow her to boast, that she has not a foe in the world; unless, indeed, envy should trans-

form some young misses, who possess not her merit, into foes, Miss Team."

"But I dont belong to that Team," retorted the undaunted heiress, "since I have established a rule, which I shall not infringe for three years and a half,—not until I arrive at that grand climacteric of discretion, that will set my parish bells a ringing, and all my tenants dancing for joy, at my being at last old enough to guide myself; and that is, never to envy any one who has hobbled out of the magic circle of juvenility. Talking of that reminds me, Louisa Vandelure, of how much I wonder Mrs. Allworthy does not persuade a certain inmate of our mansion to remember she has been on sale these four years. Four dreary long winters in town on sale, and no bidders!—and yet, on the forlorn hope, dances and dresses like a girl; and choosing quite to make a forget of her having entered the first class of despairing spinsters. But, upon my word, those growing antiques of five and twenty years experience are often too many for us chits, who have only youth and its at-

tendant attractions for our weapons, and jockey us out of the attentions of very inexperienced greenhorns; for, as to men who know the world, those full blowns dont take with them; they, as women of fashion serve their drapery, throw them by when their claim to novelty is past."

"And, pray Miss Acres," demanded Lord Derville, very gravely, "shall you not struggle a little against this severe decree of juvenile decision, when you arrive at the antiquity of five and twenty?"

"Oh, I shall kick monstrously,—or, I mean, I *should*, were I of that luckless race of inevitable spinsters; but I shall wear my years as my passport to uncircumscribed flirtations, for I shall indubitably be married, and wives and widows are privileged to flirt and dance, and to be noticed, without ignominy to a man's taste, to the end of the chapter of life."

And now, this pert country miss, exported to London by her guardian, to be transformed into a fine lady, to match highly, in proportion to the magnitude of her wealth, bounded off to the pianoforte;

and, darting an invidious look at Miss Standard, commenced the song of—

'Nobody coming to marry me.'

Lady Flowerdew, having another visit to make ere she proceeded to Carlton House, the moment Miss Acres commenced her voluntary, arose to go; and, by her inopportune departure, destroyed the effect of this intended display of comic powers.

CHAPTER XV.

ALMOST immediately after the departure of Lady Flowerdew, Mrs. Allworthy's coach arrived, to convey her young inmates to a ball; and as Lord Derville had obtained a ticket to it, in compliment to Miss Vandelure;—since the favour his lordship stood in with this admired heiress was beginning to be talked of,—he therefore took his leave with them; and these departures were shortly succeeded by all of Lady Derville visitors; when almost immediately after, the remaining group separated; Lady Meliora, Mr. Monson, and Mr. Sternham to retire for the night, Lady Derville to give a requested audience to Rosabella.

"This, madam," said Rosa, putting the present of Charles into the hand of his grandmother, "is a gift from Mr. Monson to me; and by its value being enhanced through your hair contributing to its worth,

I must suppose you knew of his intended goodness to me; but ere I could consider it as my own, I felt it my duty to learn your wishes upon the subject of my accepting it:—more particularly, as its costliness may perhaps render it an ornament not exactly suited for me."

Lady Derville, like her *protégée*, felt astonishment at the value of this gift; and, like her, the apprehension suggested itself of how it had been obtained. But this suspicion she confined to her own bosom; and although it inflicted further pangs of commiseration upon her heart, through conviction of how seriously Charles must love to induce him, who possessed such innately honourable principles, to incur a debt he had no prospect speedily to pay; yet, for once since the influence of Mr. Sternham had prevailed, acting from the inspirations of her own bosom, she wisely determined to make no comment to him upon the subject of his imprudence; but simply to present him on the morrow a *carte blanche* order upon her banker, accompanied by her desire to fill it up

with the cost of the amiable and deserving Rosabella's cross, &c.

And this resolution formed, she took the present from its case, and clasped it around our heroine's neck, and as she kissed her with the affection of former times, bid her wear it, for the sake of those she had conferred an obligation upon, that baubles could not repay.

"My token of gratitude," her ladyship continued, taking a folded paper from a drawer, "you will find here. The morning after Meliora's physicians declared her out of danger, and pronounced the large share you had in the promotion of her recovery, I caused this deed to be drawn out, to secure to you for life one hundred pounds per annum; which I have only waited a fair opportunity to present."

The effect this unexpected kindness had upon our heroine's susceptible feelings, was to draw forth a flood of tears; not perhaps so much tears of gratitude for this unexpected security from poverty through life, as joy at the implication it conveyed,

of the affection of her beloved protectress being restored to her; since to her, this was a treasure more precious than all which the liberality of Lady Derville could bestow; and many, many minutes elapsed, ere poor Rosabella could command sufficient composure, to make those acknowledgments such a gift of beneficence demanded.

As Rosabella found, in the deed presented to her by Lady Derville, half a year's payment of her annuity, she was enabled the following day, to set out upon the novel employment of shopping for herself, to make some necessary improvements in her wardrobe for her excursion to Wimbledon; after which, accompanying Lady Meliora to visit Miss Vandelure, she saw nothing of Mr. Monson from breakfast, until they met at the dinner-table of his grandmother; where Rosa with grief observed, that his aspect betrayed mental disquietude; although he endeavoured to wear his natural appearance of cheerfulness and ease; and very shortly after the adjournment of the ladies

to the drawing-room, he escaped from his irksome *tête à tête* with Mr. Sternham—Lord Derville being as usual in attendance upon Miss Vandelure—under the pretence of going to the parks to observe how the preparations for the *fête* were making progress.

On the subsequent day, which was the one appointed for commencing their visit at Lord Flowerdew's, the two young friends arose with very different emotions and expectations from their promised pleasure: Lady Meliora, although with a heart confessedly devoted to Lord Montalbert, arming herself *cap à pié* for every conquest that should come in her way; more particularly of Major Arundel—since to distance Rosabella, the beauty of imperial stamp, in the competition for this interesting young man's heart, would prove the kind of *éclat* which she panted for; and as to the success of her enslaving prowess, she sheltered not the shadow of a doubt; since her glass informed her, that illness had given an alluring deli-

cacy to her bloom, and a resistless langnor to her aspect.

And thus had uncorrected vanity taken root, and flourished in a heart genial to every sweet blossoming flower of virtue, until it had now assumed the dire form of deadly vice; for it not only bore down before it every trace of Christian humility, but gratitude to the friend who had just imperilled her own life in tender care of her; and further, was hurrying her on to the bravo's atrocity:—for what assassin is more diabolical than the mental one?—and without compunction was she deeply planning the pitiless destruction of an amiable man's peace; and that a man, whose health of body had been unhesitatingly laid down as a sacrifice to his country's welfare; and who was now an object of tender interest and grateful sympathy to all, but a vain coquette.

The feelings of Rosabella only presented her with the hope, through this visit, of making friends of those whom she felt strongly inclined to regard; whilst as to

conquests, although by no means insensible to the pleasure of being admired, she recoiled from the idea of making more; since Mr. Monson's unfortunate attachment had taught her to feel, that awakening a hopeless one was a painful infliction upon herself; and attachment of reciprocity, she was convinced, could never be experienced by her for any man but Egremont; even should she, alas! be doomed to find, that fate had indeed pronounced its irrevocable decree against their union.

The moment Charles arose from the breakfast-table this morning, he took the hand of his grandmother, and pressed it with energy as he wished her good morning.

"But you will be home, I trust, my dear boy," she said; "to accompany me to dine with the O'Dowds."

"Why, no," he replied, blushing deeply, and looking embarrassed as he spoke; "unluckily I knew not of Lady Flowerdew's intention of depriving you of—of—of Rosa's and Meliora's society for two

whole days, when I made an engagement with — the — friends who kindly performed my *ciceroni* at Oxford, to accompany them this day to Windsor; and there being much to see in that neighbourhood, they rather wish me to remain in Berkshire until to-morrow; so that, dear madam, should you have no objection to the measure—" and here the voice of Charles faltered with emotion; for, as his grandmother now treated him with affectionate indulgence, she was rapidly regaining all the influence she once held over his filial tenderness— " I would comply with their wish."

" If the individuals you accompany in these excursions, my child, are such as you think you shall be able to remember with approving satisfaction, you have my full consent to extend your absence," Lady Derville replied, with agitated solemnity.

Charles turned very pale as she spoke, hastened towards a window, affecting to be called to gaze by the rapid movement of an opportunely passing carriage;

and after a few moments devoted there to the recovery of his self-possession, he approached our heroine, and in a tone of ill-concealed bitterness he said, although attempting the ease of gaiety as he addressed her—

"Remember, Rosa, I shall expect gloves, and all sorts of bridal favours: — except a kiss;" and now his voice fell to a low hollow tone; "for that—that I could not bear,—as this excursion to Wimbledon, no one can doubt, has been promoted by *that* officious Lady Flowerdew, to forward the suit of Lord Bayswater with you."

Rosa, sensibly affected by the evident state of misery the mind of Mr. Monson was now in, felt anxiety to calm one pang at least, that of his apparent jealousy; for although the voice of duty, and the state of her own affections, presented no hope for this amiable man's unfortunate passion, yet total despair, she feared, might bear too heavily on his tortured feelings in a moment like the present, when his bosom seemed torn by a conflict of some deep and

mysterious distress; and now, blushing whilst she spoke, she said:

"Be assured, Lord Bayswater will never occasion my enriching you with any bridal favours; since he is one of those barbarians of vanity, who assail every female heart, without an intention of ever surrendering his own; and this Lady Flowerdew kindly and considerately apprised me of, on my first introduction to his lordship, lest my inexperience of the world should lead me into the snares his unpardonable vanity lays for the unwary or the wilful captive."

Charles now turned again to the window; and after remaining there for some minutes, apparently as if struggling mentally for resolution to rush at once into some dreaded exertion, he flew to his grandmother, pressed her hand in silent farewell energy, did the same by the sympathizing Rosabella; and then, kissing his sister, precipitately retreated from the room. From the moment of his departure a solemn pause prevailed; until at length the interval of painful thought

fulness was broken by Lady Derville, who said, in accents betraying how much her maternal apprehensions were awakened—

"Rosa, my love, oblige me by going up to the drawing room, to see if two letters I remarked Charles put on the mantelpiece, the moment before we descended to breakfast, are yet there."

Our heroine instantly complied; and as she approached the place she was directed to seek the letters in, she beheld Charles himself standing in one of the window recesses, buried in profound meditation; when instantly she would have retreated without disturbing him, but the effort proved vain, since the flitting of her form towards the door dissolved his painful reverie.

"Oh! Rosa," he exclaimed upbraidingly, "why, when you see me wretched, do you shun me?"

"I only feared to disturb your meditations."

"But that would have been kindness; since mine are misery's meditations."

Not all the self-possession Rosa could

command availed her now; for in defiance of every exertion, she burst into tears; and, on beholding them, Charles shook with emotion.

"Oh! what is the dire, the dreadful cause of all this misery, Charles?" faintly articulated the sobbing Rosa. "If your inexperience has unfortunately led you into any snare of villany; is there no person to be found—none—not one, whom you would confide in, capable of advising, or competent to aid in your extrication?"

"No, Rosa:—no, not one: since even to you, my beloved, my adored, I dare not, will not confide the nature of my misery:—but the distraction you behold of its infliction is caused by its blighting every fondly cherished hope of my obtaining you."

"Charles, dear and estimable *friend!*" said Rosabella solemnly, "remember your hope of obtaining a portionless, nameless wife, to the destruction of every fair prospect of sustaining an exalted station in the world, was not destroyed by this fatal

entanglement that oppresses you. Duty on my part pronounced its invincible interdiction; and on yours, the necessary recollection of what you owed to yourself, and the house you sprung from."

"Ah! Rosa, but circumstances might have arisen to remove the barrier, which your delicate sense of duty reared between us; with all the scruples my overweening pride had conjured up, to separate me from the bliss of superlative happiness. But, now! Oh, Rosa! Rosa! now—"

At this moment Lady Wilemore's equipage stopped at the door; and the loud sounding of the knocker electrified Mr. Monson, and recalled him to the recollection of an appointment which he had bound himself to fulfil; and now, in the mental agony inspired by the remembrance of this recoiled from engagement, his countenance changed from the expression of sorrow to that of despair; and with a deep drawn sigh and hurried tone, he falteringly bade Rosabella farewell.

"Farewell, for many hapless days, beloved, yet lost to me; and in our absence

from each other, you will not, in the gay revels of mirth, be allowed to bestow one thought on me; whilst my sad, my desolate thoughts, will seek, will find, no other theme but you."

Charles, the melancholy, altered Charles, had now reached the door, in this his dejected, unwilling retreat from her, to whom his love had increased like the rapid symptoms of some direfully infectious disease, within the last few weeks, until it seemed past every hope of cure; when, pausing to steal one more last and lingering look, he suddenly rushed towards her; and, ere our heroine was aware of his intention, or could find power to parry it, he clasped her in his arms,—pressed her to his throbbing bosom, with all the wild energy of adoring despair; and then rushed from the room, down a back staircase, and out of the house; leaving our poor heroine overwhelmed with the most acute distress of sympathy upon his account; but which she hastened to veil from observation, by a prompt and rapid retreat to her own chamber.

The arrival of Lady Wilemore, and length of her speculating visit for entrapping advantages for herself and family, afforded time to the alarmed and heart-wrung Rosabella to tranquillize her aspect for appearing before Lady Derville, with intelligence, that the presence of Charles in the drawing room had necessarily prevented her seeking those letters she had been sent in quest of by her ladyship.

CHAPTER XVI.

At length the carriage was announced, which was to convey Lady Meliora, our heroine, and Betty Roach, from the reluctant Lady Derville, and half maddened Mr. Sternham, to the villa of Lord Flowerdew on Wimbledon Common; where our two young friends received a kind and hospitable reception from their host and hostess, and a most flattering one from those inmates whom they respectively knew.

Lord Flowerdew was a remarkably handsome, majestically grave looking man, of about forty-four; the younger son of a viscount; and who had obtained an Earl's coronet for himself, by his surpassing abilities at the bar. In his private character, he was as distinguished for every excellence, as in his public he was renowned for talent; but, whilst grave in aspect, and dignified in deportment, his manners

were cheerful, conciliating, and gentle. As a husband and father, he was indulgent and affectionate; and feeling himself even still the lover of her whom he had wedded from early attachment, he often murmured at the labours of the bar and senate monopolizing that precious time, of which he would gladly have dedicated a great portion to her, whose volatility and zest for universal admiration, which he had greatly favoured in the spring of their union, would have led fatally into dissipation's dangerous vortex; but to his infinite and heartfelt rapture, although she had frolicked round the eddy, she had never been drawn into the whirlpool; and being through life the partial admirer of every fancy of his dearer self, his mind was predisposed to admire our heroine, whose appearance and manners soon led that disposition to receive the confirming stamp of his own uninfluenced judgment and fancy.

The party of inmates assembled at Lord Flowerdew's when our fair friends arrived, through unexpected apologies from several law friends of his lordship's,

consisted only of Lords Bayswater and William Rentlorn, Sir Simon and Lady Townhurst, Admiral Oakbury, Major Arundel, and the Miss Lorrains.

Lord William Rentlorn had allowed his admiration of Lady Meliora Monson's beauty to give his prudence so completely the *go-by*, that, although informed the odds were against speculating upon any considerable relief to his embarrassments from her moderate portion; he still clung to the hope of some pending bets, by proving successful, allowing him yet to strive for the whip-hand in her affections: he therefore would not give in; but implored his aunt to let him try his enslaver's mettle, by a close inspection of her domestic qualifications.

Lord Bayswater had learned, from Lady Flowerdew, the suspicion that rested on the legitimacy of Rosabella; and for ten restless days and nights, the dishonour to be reflected on his children, through such a dire flaw in the reputation of their maternal descent, presented every argument of extinguishable force to subdue

the rising flame within his bosom. When however, after announcing to his confidential friend Lady Flowerdew, that his heart was whole again, he heard such descriptions of Rosa's tender, amiable conduct to Lady Meliora, from her close observer Major Arundel; that, ere aware of what he meditated, he found his muse devoted to her service; and, in the celebration of female friendship, discovered his heart a second time in peril; yet, ashamed to acknowledge it fluttering towards a relapse, he unwillingly accepted the invitation of Lord Flowerdew—even after reminded of possible danger, by the query of Lady Flowerdew—" if his affections were sufficiently convalescent, to dare venture upon encountering the lovely Rosa as an inmate?"

Admiral Oakbury was suspected by all to be an enthusiastic admirer of our heroine; and Major Arundel had acknowledged to his paternal uncle, the Hon. Aubrey Arundel, in epistolary confidence, " that had he encountered either Lady Meliora Monson or Miss Frederick separately, for more than an *en passant* in-

terview, he should have inevitably become a prompt captive: but together, they each prevented the conquest of the other; for whilst fancy pronounced in favour of Lady Meliora, judgment clung to domestic happiness with Miss Frederick."

But even this share of admiration was insufficient for the insatiable vanity of Lady Meliora; who arrived at Wimbledon, resolutely determined not to leave one heart she could find on this visit unsubdued by the prowess of her charms; and therefore she instantly commenced her premeditated assault of all her victims with every fascination of her captivating vivacity, which the languor still remaining from recent indisposition allowed her to exert; whilst poor Rosa met all the partialities she had unintentionally inspired, with less chance of attracting than she had ever before been seen with; since her bosom, long the secret sanctuary of many sorrows, was now in the most painful state of anxious alarm and sympathy for Mr. Monson; while days and nights of unremitting attendance, in all the solici-

tude of tender affection by the pillow of her friend, had left its traces of fatigue upon her pensive aspect.

But, although the sorrowing, anxious Rosabella had the brilliancy of her charms thus suspended, she yet could interest resistlessly; and the two elder of Lord Flowerdew's children, Lord Belford and Lady Frances Manners, who had only been presented to her with their brothers and sisters on her arrival that morning, were so attracted towards her, that when the dinner party had assembled in the drawing room, they both nestled close to her, exerting all their endearing wiles to monopolize her attention; which their watchful mother soon perceiving, she exclaimed:

"My dear babes, how kindness has encouraged you to trespass! Miss Frederick's condescension has caused you to forget how short the period has been since your introduction to her; and has led you to encroachments threatening her with suffocation. Do, good animals, draw off from such annoying contact, and allow

this very deserving fascinator power to breathe."

Rosabella assured Lady Flowerdew, the distinguishing favour of her lovely children was a pleasure not to be relinquished by her; when Lady Townhurst, who had that morning been in company with a personage high in the estimation of the world of fashion, who spun out every syllable she uttered to a most liberal prodigality of sound—drawled out—

"Well—that—is—an—es—ta—blish—ed—rule—of—mine,—ne—ver—to—pa—tro—nise—chil—dren.—At all events, it is a sort of friend—ship that ne—ver an—swers."

"But, is it not *haut ton* at present, for ladies to patronize children?" demanded Lord Bayswater, archly glancing his eyes towards Lady Flowerdew. "The Duchess of Oldenburg adores her son; and all the world of *ton* in consequence have set up an establishment of affection for children."

"Dear Lady Flowerdew!" exclaimed

Lady Townhurst, forgetting in her alarm her lately acquired accomplishment of drawling, "do set me right on this head; for it was only yesterday I was admiring two very lovely twins of Lady Anne Dandler's, when the Marchioness of Quizland cried shame on my rusticity, and said, 'it was Gothic barbarity to patronize children.'"

"Really," responded Lady Flowerdew, "as I do not allow fashion the presumption of regulating my affections by its caprice, as it does my drapery, I cannot decide for you, Lady Townhurst;—however, Lady Horatia Clangmouth will instruct you in the exact pitch to which you may carry your affections and partialities upon the most fashionable principles; since she is profound in universal knowledge, and I expect her ladyship to form one of our this day's dinner party."

"The d—l you do!" exclaimed the admiral, starting from his chair in evident consternation; and then reseating himself, endeavoured to recover his composure.

"Why, uncle of Oakbury," said Major

Arundel, smiling, " what magic influence the name of this fair widow seems to possess over you! Verily, I never beheld your colour fly at a fair one's name before."

" Colour fly! *Morbleu!* young gentleman, but her name is quite tremendous enough to make a man's colour fly, or even to fly from his colours, to get off the same station with her orally fluent ladyship. But, my very dear friends, and destined fellow sufferers! I implore, I importune you, if you prize the sound of your own voices, with avidity to seize the golden opportunity for a short exercise of your oratoric functions; since, with sympathetic grief I tell you, that the d—l another will shed its cheering beams upon you this blessed day. If, therefore, any lady has fashions to discuss, reputations tenderly to handle, or entreaties to make to their adorers, not to seek the desperation of the Stygian lake, during this approaching embargo on hope's cheering syllables : — if any gentleman has politics to debate, bets to arrange, or

love declarations to breathe, I conjure you to be prompt in the rapidity of voluble articulation, ere the arbitrary seal of irremediable silence condemns you to the mute sufferings of the patient dumb."

"Is her ladyship then really such a prodigal in oral artillery?" demanded Sir Simon Townhurst.

"Why, sir, her very yea nay signals are made by broadsides; and—but Gay has well portrayed her oral faculty:

> 'Good gods, 'tis like a rolling river,
> That murm'ring flows, and flows for ever.'"

"She is indeed a most communicative personage, it must be confessed," said Lady Flowerdew.

"Communicative!" said Admiral Oakbury; "Satan turned retailer of his own inventions! A Wilding in petticoats! The Baroness Munchausen!!"

"A fair archer, who does most assuredly oftentimes shoot with a marvellously long bow," said Lord Flowerdew; "yet, in evidence for—not against her fair fame,

I can, to an absolute certainty, vouch, that I have caught her ladyship in a *fact.*"

"When the deuce could that be, my dear lord?" demanded the admiral. "I suffered on a home station with her a whole week, in the dawn of the day of her first widowhood,—which proved indeed a short one, for St. Thomas was her patron saint I believe, whom she prayed to for prompt consolation,—and not one word of truth could I vouch for her giving utterance to, but when she pronounced her gratitude to the physicians, who had attended her late husband in his last illness, indelible."

"It has been her mania for fame as an universally informed personage, that has led her into becoming a disciple of the Munchausen school," said Lord Flowerdew; "for sooner than allow her knowledge in all things to be detected at fault, she will unhesitatingly snatch up any materials that fall in her way—no matter how foreign the manufacture—to twine into the fabrications she requires; and, not

unfrequently, to the most perfect satisfaction of her auditors; some of whom are perchance as profoundly ignorant as she can wish them; whilst others, stunned into supineness by the overpowering din of her loquacity, will not arouse themselves to question the authenticity of her affirmations; whilst the rest act under the acquiescent influence of *politesse*, or through the self-gratulating exultation, which many a bosom glows with on beholding others gulled, through wiles which their superior wisdom has detected."

"But, notwithstanding I must acknowledge Lady Horatia to be a most impeding nuisance to my own oral propensities," said Lady Flowerdew, "yet I must also confess her to be an entertaining companion for an hour; and one who certainly never takes the bow in hand to wound a reputation."

"So much the worse, my dear madam," Admiral Oakbury replied; "an openly malicious defaulter in truth you would all scout from your circles with contempt; but here, because she hoists not malevo-

lence for her flag, you become encouragers of a detestable vice; and give it your sanction, because it appears in the specious disguise of harmless amusement."

"It is very true," said Lord Flowerdew; "and after courting her society, we should feel a little conscious of meriting the hand of correction, should we find our children pursuing so attractive an example in the path of disingenuousness."

"My dear Frances and Belford," said Lady Flowerdew in hurried accents, and blushing eloquently as she spoke, "I doubt not nurse is now preparing to commence her walk with your brothers and sisters, and I wish you, my darlings, to join their party."

Lord Belford and Lady Frances arose in prompt obedience; and, although with evident reluctance at a separation from Rosabella, unhesitatingly withdrew.

"A pretty imp, truly, to be encouraged and invited to houses!" exclaimed the admiral, his tender feelings wounded, on perceiving the poor children had made

a sacrifice to obedience; "to compel careful mothers to the distressing necessity of inflicting pain upon their offspring, to secure their morals from corruption."

"But, as the Baroness Munchausen is not more renowned for punctuality than veracity," said Lord Flowerdew, "I trust, Cecilia, you have not formed the intention of starving the Matter of Fact Society, assembled in compliment to her ladyship and Dame Moneyhive, her refined *belle-mère.*"

"Can you possibly inform me, Lady Flowerdew," said Lord Bayswater, "why Lady Horatia inflicts that appendent mortification upon herself? For although her ladyship pleased her fancy by taking for a second *sposo* a man of plebeian origin, surely she did not plight her faith to his whole *volgo* race?"

"In irrefragable testimony that she did not," Lady Flowerdew replied, "she never permitted one of the *canaille* tribe to contaminate the air she breathed, until the legitimacy of her first spouse was most unexpectedly called in question, and through

the decision of the impertinently penetrating law, her once immense jointure pitiably diminished; when, almost at the same moment, came showering from the wheel of fortune, upon the head of her *belle-mère*, incalculable wealth, through the death of her second husband, a fortunate keeper of a lottery office, who happened to get knighted upon some address. From that period of gold-refining influence, Lady Horatia has become a most dutifully attentive daughter; and politically joining establishments, philosophically ushers the poor—or rather I should say the rich *bourgeoise*, through the circle she herself moves in; often to the amazement of our auricular faculties,—if not to the improvement of our accuracy and elegance in our native language.

CHAPTER XVII.

At this moment Ladies Horatia Clangmouth and Moneyhive entered; the former, a fine looking woman of five and forty, decked in the most striking style of fashion, and evidently with the most elaborate care; the latter, much further advanced in life, and who was so enveloped in flesh, that all human form was lost in a conic rotundity not inapplicable to the name she bore, and which made the inelegance of her gait and movements still more conspicuous, whilst her dress was as attractive as a gaudy fancy could select, and as magnificent as wealth could purchase.

"My very dear Lady Flowerdew," Lady Horatia exclaimed, flying to her fair hostess, "condemn me without a jury, and execute me without benefit of clergy, as the most atrocious culprit that ever transgressed against the laws of punctuality."

"Nay, if you thus ingenuously plead

guilty," Lady Flowerdew replied, "I shall find myself but more resistlessly impelled to the pleasing side of clemency."

"The abominable books were the first aggressors," said Lady Horatia: "those abominably odious books! which I never can tear myself from after once opening the dear, delicious fascinators; so, my dear creature, after poring over four hundred and ninety-seven pages in a large folio this morning, I suddenly started into the pleasing recollection of my delightful engagement here. Five minutes dressed me —when, lo! as my foot was absolutely on my coach step, my woman, in dire consternation, came shrieking after me, to announce my having odd shoes on, and five *papillotes* in my hair. Back then to my attiring sanctuary I had to scamper, to rectify these misdemeanours of my absent faculties; and, in my race, ingeniously contrived to fracture a new point dress. In consequence, I had a complete transformation of toilet to endure; but, at length, absolutely deposited in the carriage, when being wafted hither with the velocity

of the Olympic race, out started a roving linch-pin, and narrowly we escaped a complete over——"

"Pray madam, Lady Horatia, have the goodness just to tell me," exclaimed Lord William, darting from his seat to stand in breathless anxiety before her, "are yours Whirlham's new patent linch-pins?"

"Oh, good man! know no more of the equipage that brought me hither than Diogenes did of waltzing. A vile concern belonging to my coachmaker; my own is gone to be mounted on new wheels, since the emperor wore out my last for me. But, dear Lady Flowerdew, I am miserable until my excuses are made;—so this annoying delay, through this fracture of our spring——"

"Spring!" repeated Lord William. "Why, your ladyship——"

"Yes, yes, I perceive my *lapsus linguæ*:—so, my dear madam, this annoying fracture of our pole unluckily afforded time to a messenger, mounted on a fleet courser, to come up to me with a packet of the very utmost importance from one of the

cabinet ministers, requesting all the information—which happens not to be a little—that I could possibly yield, relative to a very mysterious circumstance that occurred at Moscow, and which now engrosses many hours of the Privy Council to unravel. This messenger providently travelling with writing materials, I had no excuse to ward off sending an immediate answer: and, that dispatched, our horse by that time recovered of his alarmingly impeding fit, we were permitted to achieve our arrival hither without further interruption."

"And, by George, a miraculous achievement that was; with linch-pin lost, and spring and pole fractured, and one horse in a fit!" exclaimed Admiral Oakbury, with ludicrous rapidity, as if willing to make the most of *his* achievement of catching her ladyship taking breath. "And, pray now, madam, can you possibly inform me, if his Majesty's Privy Council have yet graciously taken it into consideration, whether we are in future to carry on our warfare at sea with the artillery for years

established, or are to learn a new process, much admired, I find,—the art of archery, and use the long-bow?"

"Why," returned her ladyship, undauntedly, "the matter has, I know, been some time in discussion; but, upon mature deliberation, it has been agreed—'those arms are best for use that yet have never failed.'"

"And with flying colours, I pronounce, the Horatia may sail off under the admiral's convoy to Table Bay, at our Cape of Good Hope—of obtaining some necessary refreshment," said Lady Flowerdew, smiling at the dexterity with which Lady Horatia parried the sarcasm, and arising to obey the summons to their long protracted banquet.

"I declare," said Lady Horatia, the moment she was presented with her first plate of food at dinner,—"I declare my fingers are so cramped by writing, I shall scarcely be able to manage the exploit of feeding myself. It really is inconceivable the innumerable letters I scampered through this day; and, although mine is certainly

the pen of a tolerably ready writer, I had such varied subjects to treat upon, I was employed almost from the dawn of day until I came hither."

"Except the few seconds you withdrew from that employment to scamper through four hundred and ninety-seven pages of large folio!—Prodigious mental prowess, even that, Lady Horatia!" said the admiral, slyly, who could not be flattered by her well turned compliment to his profession, into beholding her besetting sin with lenity.

"Oh, that was no prowess in me," replied her ladyship. "Why, reading and writing at the same identical moment,—ay, and upon even the most important subjects, is become so habitual to me, that I absolutely think I do both with better effect conjointly than separately; and, to-day, I carefully perused seven political pamphlets sent me from a certain member of the Treasury Bench for my candid opinion of their logic; and four from a leader of opposition to know my ideas upon their sarcastic point; and,

at the very same time, I scribbled off two letters of congratulation upon marriages, five of condolence upon deaths and the recovery of an odious husband; one to my almoner in the country, of reprehension for his supineness; and one to a young friend, to advise her upon a matrimonial speculation."

"The d—l you did!" exclaimed Admiral Oakbury,—"I should like much to know how your ladyship manages your tacks from the book to the pen.—What! line about, like the cross reading of a newspaper? Such a *pot-pourri* of ideas must be very edifying to the members of our senate."

"Lawk, no, sir," exclaimed Lady Moneyhive, "there was no popery, nor sedition, in any thing as my daughter-law, Lady *Orasher*, wrote to those parliament men, I'll assure you, sir, nor no jumblements from newspapers; for she is so fine a *scollard* she wants help from none on them: for she writes like a lawyer, and reads as fine as any play actor—never at

no loss, nor laying her *M faces* any how but right."

"Dear ma'am," exclaimed Lady Horatia, absolutely beaming a visible blush through her rouge; "that anecdote, which we have so improperly imitated the ludicrous slang of, not being known to the present company, I am absolutely called upon to relate, to rescue you from the suspicion of laying your *M faces* incorrectly. So, you must know, Lady Flowerdew, when we were at—at York, a man was taken before the Mayor for hissing a celebrated actor through his performance, who, in his vindition, alleged—'the actor had not laid his *M faces* correctly;'—and, unfortunately, this *critique*, pleasing our ludicrous fancy, we have often unluckily quoted it;—so often, it seems, and which is not unfrequently the case, that our mockery has turned to contagion."

From this oration, Lady Horatia rolled off into a torrent of volubility, which no individual present had power to stem; talking upon all subjects, and blending

truth and fiction with a rapidity and perseverance, amazing if not amusing to the circle, who were perforce converted into auditors; but at length, on her mentioning a rising orator at the bar, she unwarily proclaimed his having been her playmate in their juvenile days;—"that they even had learned out of the same book; and many an hour had conned their syntax together;" when Lady Moneyhive exclaimed,—edging in her oral sounds with a degree of dexterity that none else could achieve—

"*Sin* tax! Why laws! is there going to be a tax on sin?—I suppose set on foot by that there society for the *impression* of vice.—It will be productive enough, I'll warrant. But, laws! how will they manage for collecting on it?"

"Dear ma'am," cried her mortified relative, peevishly, "one would really imagine, instead of being rich as Crœsus, you were indigent as a pauper. You so abominate taxes, that your thoughts, I verily believe, dwell upon nothing else; and if any word—the most remote in na-

ture, sounds like increasing the revenue, you fume and fret, until it is quite farcical. I remember your once before making a ludicrous mistake upon the same subject, in one of your absent fits; it was at the theatre at Bath, when viewing the performance of Cymon; and when Fatima commenced her song of 'Tax my tongue!' you instantly exclaimed, in a tone of pitiable alarm,—

"'What will they tax next?'"

"But that alarm was very natural, and very amiable," said Admiral Oakbury; "since it was evidently excited by her ladyship's kind sympathy for friends, whom such a tax, in possibility, might affect."

"But really, dear ma'am," continued Lady Horatia, not pausing to attend to the admiral's innuendo, "I do wish you would discontinue your imitation of Mrs. Fretland, in calling things by the wrong name.—*A-propos!* of Mrs. Fretland.—You remember her a girl, Lord Flowerdew; and must recollect her having been eleven times on the point of matrimony, when

eitheir death, or inconstancy, broke off the union; but her twelfth wooer dissolved the malignant spell, for she then married, and very shortly became a widow: but now, poor thing, she is in real grief, having just lost her only child;—so I scribbled to her — at the moment I was instructing my housekeeper how to preserve cucumbers the Indian way—just to say, 'that when it was possibly in the nature of compatibility with the overwhelming torrent of excruciating affliction she was now anguished by, to bestow one straying thought upon insignificant mortals like myself, I would, with the alacrity of friendship, fly to her, could my presence afford her any comfort, when time, by its meliorating influence, should commence its gifting the presence of friendship with the balmy power of soothing sorrows of magnitude like hers.' "

"But, absolutely, your ladyship has been rather unreasonable to this poor Mrs. Fretland," said Lord Bayswater hastily, whilst Lady Horatia was necessarily silenc-

ed by the act of drinking wine with Sir Simon Townhurst, — whose compulsatory dumb-show-solicitation for that honour she had comprehended—" for you expect such an inundation of grief from her, that not to forfeit the high opinion you have formed of her maternal susceptibility, she must, in common decency, abstain from the consolation of your commiserating presence for six calendar months at least."

" I'll be tongue-tied if she takes the hint!" exclaimed Lady Horatia, gulping down her wine so eagerly, to resume her oral fluency, it occasioned a momentary fit of coughing, that afforded Lady Flowerdew the opportunity of saying—

" Mrs. Fretland is of a stock renowned for susceptibility. I have heard, her mother, after entombing herself in a darkened room for five years, subsequent to the death of her first spouse, emerged from her dolorous seclusion on the fifth anniversary of her widowhood, in all the pomp of bridal finery, to be united to her late husband's executor, who had been the

only person admitted to her presence, except her children, during the solemn period of her sequestration."

"And that solely, she said, in the way of business;" exclaimed Lady Horatia, now restored to unimpeded powers of oratory,—"and in four days after, she, to the amazement of all around her, presented him with ten thousand pounds, to allow her to retreat to her dark room, to grieve again;—when, to leave her perfectly unmolested, he marched off with the cash, and a negro nymph, whom in her sable fancies she had selected to attend her—to the coast of Guinea, I suppose; whilst the determined mourner contrived by some *hocus pocus* of your law necromancy, Lord Flowerdew, to make this marriage null and void, by drawing out of the shade of obscurity a prior wife; and so as a retaining fee, for assistance in such ingenious devices, she bestowed her fair hand upon her lawyer, who turned out her *brief* wooer, and made her pay all the costs of his suit of love."

And now, without one preparatory pause,

Lady Horatia branched off into a wide ocean of anecdote; and upon that expanse of rolling waters she took a rapid voyage, to inform the party assembled upon what terms every crowned head in Europe lived with their royal consorts; even penetrating impenetr*abilities*, and other supposed inaccessible repositories, to elicit such domestic secrets.

"As to the dear Princess of ——," she continued, "I have the heartfelt pleasure to state she is well and happy:—never has the diadem's *thorns* encircled her brow; and she passes her time chiefly in reading, and in the exercise of all the elegant accomplishments she has been ever renowned for.—At present she is engaged, for pastime, in embroidering the most exquisitely beautiful thing that ever yet was seen; the pattern her own elegant design: but it will be a monstrous undertaking, I find."

"Oh, oh! A waistcoat for her royal spouse, I presume then?" said the admiral.

"Not exactly that," replied Lady Ho-

ratia, " nor yet a flag recording England's glory.—No, her elegant employment is meant for a ———, but I am not at liberty to divulge the secret yet."

" Pray, madam," said Admiral Oakbury, with eager gravity and dry drollery blended in his finely expressive countenance, " have the goodness to relieve my painful uncertainty, relative to the fate of a worthy friend of mine, by informing me if Captain Macgabble, of the royal navy, is alive or dead?"

" O, alive!—and commander of some fort,—beyond the Ganges, sir."

" Indeed!—When I last heard of him he was a prisoner of war in France."

" True, true:—now I perfectly recollect all about it.—He was taken in the chops of the Channel.—O yes, I perfectly remember the circumstance."

" The d——l you do!" returned the admiral, with an inimitably performed stare of amazement.—" Why it occurred in George the Second's reign."

" Why then, my good sir, we certainly

cannot mean the same individual. My Captain Mag-groggle—or—the deuce is in his posing name!—must be son to yours. Indeed I know he is, for he mentioned to me, with tears in his eyes, the captivity of his worthy father. But, whatever ambiguity may have attended the fate of your captain, be assured, it cannot surpass the extraordinary circumstances which accompanied the capture of mine."

"Mine was merely an archer of such marvellous prowess," responded the admiral, "that he could send his long-bow to the bottom of the deep;—penetrate the clouds with it;—or enter the most impervious passes. However, he chanced one day to overshoot his mark, as he sent down an arrow—in pursuit of a mermaid—into the regions of Neptune; when being as expert a diver as he was a shot, he just popped down to see what cheer with his arrow; when lo! and behold!—a net from a French frigate was lying in ambush for turbot, where he wandered—and, egad, before he could with safety draw breath,

he found himself hauled up before *Monsieur le capitaine*, with a number of unwary soles and other odd fish."

"Ay, but mine, sir," said her ladyship, "was hung up at the yard-arm, by his crew, in a mutiny; then flung overboard; and, after floating three days and four nights, on the briny deep, a French cruiser took him up, for the sake of the gold on his uniform; and this the French pirates were in the identical act of ripping off, when an experimental philosopher on board laid an immense wager with the chief mate, that he would bring the defunct to life; and accordingly galvanized him most successfully; and, after his miraculous re-animation, refusing to fight against a British ship, the brave and loyal O'Grapple was handcuffed, and sent on shore the first fair opportunity; where he remained, poor fellow, until Bonaparte sent him out on a mission for him to the Cape,—where I told you I last saw him."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lady Flowerdew considerately calculating the gentlemen present had been sufficiently amused by the long-bow exercise, at this moment arose from table, and adjourned, with the females of the circle, to her drawing room; and ere the remaining party from the banquet made their appearance, Lady Horatia had taken her departure for town; to fulfil, by her own account, more engagements that evening, than could in possibility be accomplished in a month. This voluble dame being removed, Lady Meliora formed the prompt resolution of becoming the most conspicuous figure in the foreground of the picture, for the remainder of the day; but when she commenced her determination to fascinate all present, the auxiliary she unwittingly called in to her aid was conspicuous affectation.

Nor was the affectation or vanity's display of Lady Meliora through this evening calculated to disperse the cloud, that obscured the resistless charms of Rosabella; for with the mortification of sincere friendship she beheld it, and with pain and grief saw its ungenial influence on all around her: but she had only been accustomed to play the Mentora with the most delicate caution; therefore no admonitory look of hers—if even comprehended—would have been likely to prove effective in that way, which affection could have wished.

The Miss Lorrains, unimpeded by distorting affectation and disgusting vanity, or by any mental conflict, were unquestionably the attractive stars of this evening. They exerted their musical abilities with all the simple grace of genuine taste, and all the captivations of real genius; and they moved, and looked, and conversed with the animated ease, that proves the best auxiliary in the art of pleasing.

Far in advance was the evening, when to the surprise of Lady Flowerdew, after the loud sounding peal of a herald at the

gate, Mrs. Racket and Miss Delvely were announced.

Mrs. Racket was a determined and indefatigable racer through dissipation's most fashionable rounds; who never signed the death warrant of less than three pair of coach horses, or precipitated fewer than two coachmen into *galloping* consumptions, during each season in London;—whose milliners' bills were always the longest on record, although the most rapid in forming; who made it a rule ever to return into the country not on speaking terms with her husband, after the town expenditure had come before him for reimbursement; and who was now on a political visit of a day or two to Mr. Racket's banker, whose villa was in Lord Flowerdew's neighbourhood.

Miss Delvely, niece to this banker, was a pretty looking girl, of eighteen, just emerged from a finishing seminary of fashionable celebrity; and, enveloped in the vapor of her manifold accomplishments, she was borne high in the clouds of her exquisite preeminence. As ac-

quiring these accomplishments had been the only business of her life for the last three years; and the astonishment and *éclat* they must inevitably create, when burst upon the world, her only thought;—she had imbibed the belief of accomplishments being the only object of this life; and now, wherever she appeared, her acquirements were her constant theme. In vanity's high hope, that her efforts at fathoming the stores of others would redound to the conviction of her own superiority, she fastened upon every female who would lend her an attentive ear, to talk over her attainments, and, whilst doing so, warily to penetrate into theirs,—or at least deluding herself into the belief that she did so: yet whilst mentally exulting in her discoveries of the ignorance of her dearest friends, which she had happily made, she never took into her calculations, that the lore of knowledge, if effectively imbibed, rests seldom on the surface; but, sinking into the intellect, diffuses its usefulness through every faculty, evincing its treasures by the rich and brilliant

tones it emanates from the mind; not in the flimsy retailings of scholastic memory, alert in practice from repetition days, spouting forth those lessons too lately acquired to be forgotten.

"My dear Lady Flowerdew," exclaimed Mrs. Racket, the moment she entered, and half breathless in her speed for articulation, "you must pronounce Flora Delvely and me stark mad, when you learn we have scampered across the common by ourselves, to look in and see if your party sports such inveterate quizzes, such dead flats, as we left, losing their money and their tempers, at the worthy banker's yonder."

"And now you have looked," replied Lady Flowerdew, smiling, "what do you think of us?"

"Oh, certainly not a quiz to be detected in your collection, that is poz; but whether a *lourd* assemblage, time must tell me; and to avail myself of that requisite time, I mean to treat myself with a monstrous gossip here; as I want to consult you upon a momentous affair—how to spend

my prudent husband's cash most effectually in the country; for you must know I have been playing the very deuce in town this season—killed five coach-horses outright, and broke the wind of two; but that was his imperial majesty's fault, not mine—had my pocket picked of a thousand pounds in bank-notes, getting in at St. Paul's to see the monarchs—lost a brilliant comb, value immense, coming out of White's—and spent sacks of money, I know not how, except through the squandering magic that makes it fly in London. So my *caro sposo*, who all the world knows is *un franc nigaud*, has determined, in his wisdom, to confine me for two dreary years in the woods of Westmoreland; I am therefore determined to illumine those woods with all the most brilliant stars of fashion, and to set the lakes on fire with my *fêtes*, although poor Racket will never contrive to perform that *feat* upon the Thames; and so I am in quest of advisers how to strike out dashing schemes for me, to let the hum-drum man know, that dross can fly like chaff before

the wind in the country as well as in town. So, my dear peeress, your mite of counsel I humbly crave, to set the pelf a-going."

"You could not have a better counsellor than my *sposa*," said Lord Flowerdew; "adopt her plans, and the pelf will fly. Clothe the naked, feed the hungry, liberate the debtor from prison, visit the sick, comfort old age, and provide refuge for the destitute—for that is the way my *cara* spends her *sposo's* money in the country."

Lady Flowerdew deeply blushed, and so did Mrs. Racket; but the latter, laughing off her momentary chagrin, gaily exclaimed,

"O, your cardinal virtues are not on my list of confederates. Quite enough for me, to aid the poor in public patriotic subscriptions. I wish to live all the days of my life; and if I do contrive to ruin Racket—which surely I have a right to do, having brought him so immense a portion—why you know, being in the full bloom of my charms, I can readily patch him up again, by obtaining large damages

for him in a cause before your Lordship."

Lady Flowerdew blushed more brightly than before, and her brilliant eyes beamed the sparkling flash of high disapprobation upon her, who could so carelessly speak of such enormity. The Admiral looked fiercely on her, then apprehensively on the young women who had unfortunately heard her. Lord Flowerdew knit his naturally placid brow, and Lady Townhurst drew her chair close to Mrs. Racket's, to take lessons upon spending that cash she found she had a right to squander, since she had brought her spouse so large a portion; and her eager inquiries of—

"La, ma'am, how do you purpose illumining your woods with fashionable stars, and performing fiery feats on your lakes? I should vastly like to know, as we have woods and lakes on our estates"—soon drew from the dissipated Mrs. Racket information sufficient to send Sir Simon on his rapid way to St. George's Fields; and, whilst she was thus laudably and instructively holding forth, her friend

Miss Delvely was displaying, most gratifyingly to herself, her own acquirements to the gentlemen present, whilst only appearing, she flattered herself, amiably employed in seeking to draw into notice the accomplishments of others.

This knowledge inquisitor had long since developed Miss Lorrain's superiority in every species of acquirement over herself; therefore, to bait her hooks to catch what she knew she should not find—ignorance—was not in the code of her politics; but Lady Meliora, Mary Lorrain, and our heroine, she examined without ceremony; and as Rosabella's replies were the evasive ones of modesty shrinking from boast, she drew conclusions agreeable to her own wishes. And now most amiably, to mortify the poor ignoramus by her own superlative attainments, she commenced a detail of all her masters and all her mistresses, who, in number, could just have formed a full quadrille, with the allowance of a tolerable band; and, after running over all the varieties of knowledge they disseminated, and how fortunately high

she ranked in their favour, she branched off to a ludicrous account of a poor *ninny*, whom she had been dozed to death by, during the whole of the preceding day, at her uncle's. "An uninformed noodle," said she, "thought the earth was a plane —that Venice was a duchy—that chronology was a mechanic art—that hydrostatics was a disease—and the British Institution an hospital. Whilst, as a climax to all these discoveries, I detected her nescience in all history, but the history of Lady Celestina Fala, and my Lord Mooncalf; or of *belle* letters, except the letters of novel belles—for such only has been her despicable line of reading.

"And which appeared so vastly contemptible to me," she continued, "since Mrs. Veneer, my governess, would as soon allow the small-pox in her house as a novel; so that I was never permitted the perusal of such pernicious trash, and never read one in my life."

Mary Lorrain was gifted with a happy flow of animated spirits, which awakened a resistless propensity to sportive sallies;

and although scarcely knowing more than the names of a few novels, now affected amazement at Miss Delvely's want of taste, in not adoring that fascinating line of reading; and with a view of making this antinovelist retract for her amusement, and acknowledge she had dived deeply into the forbidden springs of fancy, reminded her, "that the most learned woman of the age, Madame de Stael, not only condescended to read, but to write novels—that the celebrated Lord Orford had written a romance—that not only Dr. Johnson had been suspected of aiding in such matters, but also a not long since deceased prelate, famed for piety:"—and so nearly at length did the wild Mary succeed in her project, that Miss Delvely began to apprehend that she had implicated her taste, by denying her information upon the subject in question; and how with plausibility to retract became her painful puzzle.

Just in this moment of mental difficulty, Mrs. Racket, who had given all the instruction in her power to yield to

Lady Townhurst, in one lesson on how to squander wealth, exclaimed—

"Come, Flora, or we shall be fancifully apprehensive in recrossing the common, and pleasingly imagine ourselves pursued by banditti, as the poor heroine was in that romance we have just finished together. Do skim it, Lady Flowerdew; it will serve to keep you awake in the country, which will be a service, although it is by apprehension. Flora Delvely will tell you the name, for she is the novelist's magazine and catalogue too."

"La, Mrs. Racket! not since I went to Mrs. Veneer's; for she so highly disapproves of such paltry trash of reading, that she made a convert of me."

"Not she, indeed," cried her dear friend, maliciously; "for you eagerly devour every novel and romance that comes out—good, bad, or indifferent, moral or the reverse. Why, my dear, how could you find a new character for every day in the year, if you did not study for precedents? But come, the night wanes.—Adieu, Lady Flowerdew and circle. Send

inquiries on the morrow after our precious lives and property.—Farewell! farewell!"

And now away these dear friends scampered to quarrel as they went, as pastime for their apprehensions; and the moment they left the room, Miss Lorrain, fearing her sister, in her project for leading this antinovelist to revoke, had awakened a belief in her auditors of her being a silly enthusiast in the cause she defended, commenced a mild rebuke to lead to Mary's justification.

"How could you," she said, "commit yourself so thoughtlessly to Miss Delvely? You who really are so little acquainted with that class of writers she affects to despise, have given her cause to believe you a female Quixote—a Lydia Languish; and that the ingenious Mr. Barrett humanely wrote his Heroine as a kind lesson for you."

"And there is my friend to keep your sister in countenance for error in judgment, Miss Lorrain," said Lady Meliora, smiling; "for she too has committed herself most famously; and, I

doubt not, the fair accomplished will paint you as the princess Noodlebella. Why how, child, could you respond to her catechism, with such a shower of negatives as you did?—'Are you an accomplished singer?'—'No.' 'A skilful painter?'—'No.' 'A show-off dancer?'—'No.' 'A scientific musician?'—'No.

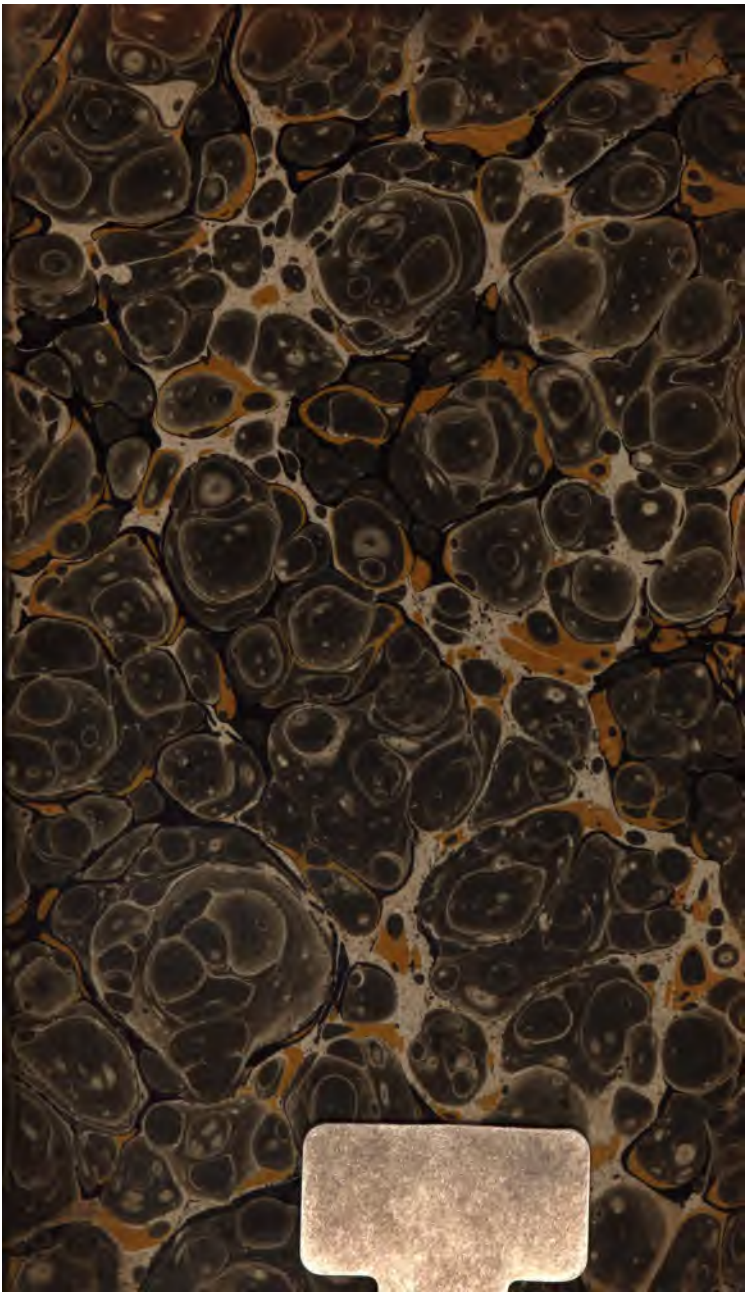
"But, my dear Meliora, although I perceived, by the glances of commiseration I was eliciting by my veracity," said Rosa, "that I was the executioner of my own consequence, and degrading myself completely in her estimation; how would affirmatives have sounded in respondence to such direct questions?"

"You should have exercised your ingenuity, not your ingenuousness, child; and played her off," replied her ladyship.

"Ah!" said Rosa, shaking her head, "but I have no ingenuity that way."

Lord Flowerdew now promising to take our heroine under his tuition, to initiate her in the art of responding to puzzling questions, drew her into an animated

dialogue, which charmed all those who listened to it, and caused the sigh of pitying regret to heave, that one who could so playfully fascinate, had any mental sorrow to cloud the enchanting aspect of such sweetly chastened vivacity.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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